ISLAM-OUR CHOICE

(Abridged Edition)

Free Series No. 2

PRINTED FOR

جمعية الدعوة الاسلامية

طرابلس-ليبيا

JAMIAT DAWAH ISLAMIA

TRIPOLI-LIBYA

BY

BEGUM AISHA BAWANY WAKF

P. O. BOX 4178

KARACHI. (PAKISTAN)

DEDICATION

To the Spirits of Truth, who all
Brought God's Message for Mankind.
Amongst them, Noah, Abraham,
Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, John and
Jesus. Also the Last of the Prophets
Muhammad (peace and salutations
on all of them—Ameen).

Say ye: We believe
In God, and the revelation
Given to us and to Abraham,
Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob,
And the Tribes, and that given
To Moses and Jesus, and that given
To (all) Prophets from their Lord,
We make no difference
Between one and another of them
And we bow to God (in Islam).

(*Al-Qura'n Sura II*: 136)

FIRST EDITION	35,000	COPIES	FEB.	1961
SECOND EDITION	50,000	COPIES	SEP.	1967
THIRD EDITION	50,000	COPIES	MAY	1968
FOURTH EDITION	25,000	COPIES	AUG.	1969
FIFTH EDITION	25,000	COPIES	OCT.	1970
SIXTH EDITION	25,000	COPIES	OCT.	1976
SEVENTH EDITION	20,000	COPIES	DEC.	1977

Printed by

Ashraf Publications, 437/D-G. E. Karachi-5

Phone : 76488

Printed at :

MASHHOOR OFFSET PRESS,

Karachi.

CONTENTS

Section IV—Reformers, Preachers and Social Workers

PREFACE

One requires no exceptional intelligence to perceive that the contemporary non-Muslim world has to its credit a good many solid impressive achievements; it operates on much higher level of energy and efficiency than the Muslim world; it has been able to yoke the forces of nature to the service of humanity in a manner undreamt of in the past; it has been able to overpower, to a very great extent, the monsters of poverty, disease and ignorance and has brought about a tremendous rise in the standard of living

All these are, indeed, great achievements and raise a number of serious questions for all thinking people. Has the modern civilization really been able to put man on the road to his self-fulfilment? Has it really succeeded in enabling man to achieve the real goal of his existence? Has it been able to provide the bliss and happiness for which the human soul has thirsted throughout the ages? Has it really been able to lift up mankind from the plane of animal existence? Has it succeeded in the enrichment, ennoblement and refinement of man's life?

Quite a few of those in the Muslim world, who have either seen the Western world from a distance or through coloured glasses (owing to pre-conceived notions and an acute sense of inferiority), have been taken in by the artificial sheen and glamour of modern Western civilization. Some of them have been so overwhelmingly impressed by the West that they look upon it as the apogee of man's creative achievement. For this reason they have

been robbed, more or less, of faith in their own religion and its principles. In fact, they have developed an attitude of blind adoration for everything Western. Therefore, anything in their own way of life which appears to be out of tune with the precepts or practices of the West, is thoughtlessly brushed aside as old-fashioned and inapplicable to conditions in modern living. The queer thing is that although these people are admirers of a civilization which, in their view, is based on the primacy of reason, they think it absolutely unnecessary to apply their own minds to determine whether those elements of Western civilization which they seek to graft are healthy or not.

Some of these people dismiss all religions, including Islam, as unsuited to the requirements of the present age, the "Age of Reason". For, religion in the opinion of these newfangled intellectuals, is a bundle of irrational dogmas and superstitions. Little do these people care to pause for a minute and reflect that even if their statement could apply to other religions, it could not apply to Islam which is founded upon rational principles. Indeed, the revolution brought about by the Holy Prophet in the history of religious thought is that he won over converts not by means of miracles, but by rational persuasion. Instead of paralysing the human intellect, the demand of the Holy Qur'an from man is to open his eyes and exercise his rational faculty. For, if man does that without crippling his mind with prejudice, he is bound, with the help and guidance of Allah, to discover the Reality which is prepared to manifest itself to people who do not deaden their hearts and minds, in literally everything in the universe—in the alteration of day and night, in the wonderful creation of the heavens and the earth, in the amazing order, purposefulness and wisdom pervading the universe reflected in the faultless operation of the laws of nature, etc., which point to the fact that this universe is not a product of blind chance but the result of Divine Will.

But the human intellect which can discover Reality must indeed be a pure one, not the one perverted by animal lusts and base desires. The danger from the present-day civilization to mankind is not that it has set the human mind free in its search after truth. On the contrary, the danger arises from the fact that it has crippled the human mind by placing it under the dead-weight of animal passions. And the modern civilization has no dearth of tools by which it achieves this. Look at the bookstalls: they are full of filthy, almost pornographic literature. Look at the movies: they are full of erotic scenes and portrayals of sex-relationship. Look at the centres of entertainments; they are full of shows and dances which are chiefly directed at arousing sex-passions, so much so that striptease shows have become one of the most popular forms of present-day entertainment. And to reap the harvest of all this, fullest opportunity of unrestricted mixing has been provided to members of both the sexes.

In this atmosphere, charged with sensual passions, it has become well-nigh impossible for a large number of human beings to exercise their intellect with freedom or to respond to their inner voice—the voice of their true, God-given nature. Yes, it is impossible for a large number of people; who have opened their eyes in the unhealthy surroundings created by the contemporary civilization, to think freely; but not for all of them. Even in these perverted surroundings the voice of reason and conscience finds a response in the hearts of truth-seekers. Such men have the vision which helps them see the inner rottenness of the contemporary civilization despite its lustrous exterior. Such people are possessed of the true human nature which hungers for real satisfaction and happiness even after the physical appetites have been satisfied. For it is only in discovering and attuning itself to Reality that the human soul can find real peace and contentment.

This book is an account of the discovery of truth by some of these great people—people who were burning with the desire to discover the Truth and who would be content with nothing short of it. These people were born and brought up in non-Islamic environments and were unfamiliar with Islam and its teachings. They were part of the modern Western civilization which has such an enchanting influence on so many of us. And yet their souls remained unsatisfied until they had found the STRAIGHT PATH the path of Islam.

The book is being published with the hope that it would prove of real help to many in their earnest search after Truth.

Ebrahim Ahmad Bawany
Darul Aman,"
Road No. 4,
Lalazar, Karachi-2.

In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful

INTRODUCTION

Islam is the religion of truth. It is the embodiment of the code of life which God, the creator and the Lord of the universe, has revealed for the guidance of mankind.

For a proper reconstruction of human life man needs two kinds of things, viz., (a) huge resources to maintain life and fulfil the material needs of the individual and the society, and (b) knowledge of the principles of individual and social behaviour to enable man to have self-fulfilment and to maintain justice and tranquility in human life. The Lord of the Universe has provided for both these needs in full measure. To cater to the material needs of man He has provided nature with all kinds of resources, which lie at the disposal of man. To provide for his spiritual, social and cultural needs He raised His Prophets from among humankind and revealed to them the code of life which can guide man's steps to the right Path. This code of life is known as **Islam**, the religion preached by all the **prophets of God.***

Allah said "Say: 'We believe in God, and in that which has been sent down to us, and sent down unto Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes. We believe in all that was given unto Moses, Jesus and other messengers from their Lord. No distinction do we make between them, and unto Him we surrender'" (*Al-Qur'an, III*:84)

Also that "In truth hath He sent down to thee the Book which confirmeth those which preceded it"

(*Al-Qur'an, III*:2)

All of them called humanity to the way of the Lord, the way of submission to Allah. All of them gave the same message, all of them stood for the same cause: That is **Islam**.

*The Qur'an says: "He hath ordained for you (O Muhammad) that faith which He commended unto Noah, and that which We inspire to thee, and that which commended unto Abraham, Moses and Jesus, saying: 'Establish the Faith and be not divided therein'" **(*Al-Qur'an XLII*:13)**

wonderful design in nature—can it be without a Designer? We feel lofty purpose in physical and human existence—can it be without a Will working behind it? We find that the universe is like a superbly written fascinating novel—can it be without an Author? Truly, Allah said:

> "O Mankind! worship your Lord, who hath created you and those before you, so that ye may ward off evil. Who hath appointed the earth a resting place for you, the sky a canopy, and causeth water to pour down from the heavens thereby producing fruits as food for you. So do not set up rivals to Allah, when ye know (Better)". (*Al-Qur'an, II*.21-23)
>
> This is the basic tenet to which Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked humanity to adhere to.

It is an important metaphysical concept and answers all the riddles of the universe. It points to the supremacy of the law in the cosmos, the all-pervading unity behind the manifest diversity.

It presents a unified view of the world and offers the vision of an integrated universe. It is a mighty contrast to the piecemeal views of the scientists and the philosophers and unveils the truth before the human eye. After centuries of groping in the dark man is now coming to realise the truth of this concept and modern scientific thought is moving in this direction.*

But it is not merely a metaphysical concept or just a jumble of barren words. It is a dynamic belief and a revolutionary doctrine. It means that all men are the creatures of one God—they are all equal. Discrimination based on colour, class, race or territory is unfounded and illusory. It is a remnant of the days of ignorance which had chained men down to servitude. Humanity is one single family of God and there can be no sanction for these barriers. Men are one—and not Bourgeois or Proletariat, White or

---

*See: Francis Mason (Ed.), The Great Design (Duckworth, London).

observe and understand are worse than cattle (VII:179), that the meanings of revelation become manifest to those "who have knowledge" (VI:98) and "Who have understanding", (VI:99) that "whosoever has been given knowledge has indeed been given an abundant good," (II:269) that they deserved government who, among other things, have physical strength coupled with knowledge (II:247) and that of all things it is knowledge by virtue of which man is superior to angels and has been made the vicegerent of God on earth (II:30). The Prophet of Islam said:

> "He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God."
>
> "To seek knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim."
>
> "Acquire knowledge, because who acquires it in the way of the Lord performs an act of piety; he who speaks of it praises the Lord; he who disseminates it bestows alms and he who imparts it to others performs an act of devotion to Allah".

This is how Islam brings man out of the world of superstition and darkness and initiates him into that of knowledge and light.

Again, Islam is a practical religion and does not indulge in empty and futile theorisings. It has that faith is not a mere profession of beliefs: it is the very mainspring of life. Righteous conduct must follow belief in Allah. Religion is something to be lived, and not an object of mere lip-praise and lip-service. The Qur'an says:

"Those who believe and act righteously, joy is for them, and a blissful home to return to". (*Al-Qur'an, XIV: 29*)
And Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

> "God does not accept belief, if it is not expressed in deed; and does not accept deed, if it does not conform to belief".

Thus, Islam is a simple, rational and practical religion.

2 Unity of Matter and Spirit

A unique feature of Islam is that it does not divide

life into watertight compartments of matter and spirit. It regards life as a unity. It stands, not for life-denial, but for life-fulfilment. Islam does not believe in asceticism. It does not ask man to avoid things material. It holds that spiritual elevation is to be achieved by living piously in the rough and tumble of life and not by renouncing the world. The Qur'an advises us to pray as follows.

"Our Lord! Give us the good in this world and the good in the hereafter". (*Al-Qur'an, II:*201)

Allah strongly censures those who refuse to enjoy His blessings: The Qur'an says:

> "Say (to them): By whose order have you denied yourself those amenities which God hath created for His people and those good things to eat and use which He hath made for you." (*Al-Qur'an: VII* 32)
>
> Islam's injunction is, "Eat and drink, but exceed not (indulging in extravagance)". (*Al-Qur'an VII* 31)
>
> The Holy Prophet said
>
> "The Muslim who lives in the midst of society and bears with patience the afflictions that come to him is better than the one who shuns society and cannot bear any wrong done to him"

He said:

> "Keep fast and break it (at the proper time) and stand in prayer and devotion (in the night) and have sleep for your body has a right over you and your eyes have a right over you, and your wife has a right over you, and the person who pays a visit to you has a right over you."

On another occasion he said:

> "These three things also enter faith:
>
> (a) to help others, even when one is himself economically hard-pressed.
>
> (b) to pray ardently for the peace of all mankind, and
>
> (c) to administer justice to one's own self"

Thus Islam does not admit any separation between

'material' and 'moral', 'mundane' and 'spiritual' etc. and enjoins man to devote all his energies to the reconstruction of life on healthy foundations. It teaches him that moral and material powers must be welded together and that spiritual salvation can be achieved by using the material resources for the good of man, and not by living a life of asceticism.

The world has suffered at the hands of the "brilliant" onesidedness of many a religion and ideology. Some have laid emphasis on the spiritual side of life but have ignored its material mundane aspects. They have looked upon the world as an illusion, a deception and a trap.

On the other hand materialistic ideologies have totally ignored the spiritual and moral side of life and have dubbed it as fictitious and imaginary. Both these attitudes have spelled disaster. They have robbed mankind of peace, contentment and tranquility. Even today the imbalance is manifest. The French scientist Dr. [illegible] says:

> "The danger inherent in too intense material civilization is to that civilization itself; it is the disequilibrium which would result if a parallel development of the spiritual life were to fail to provide the needed balance".

> Christianity erred on one extreme, Modern Civilization has erred on the other. According to Lord Snell: "We have built a nobly proportioned outer structure, but we have neglected the essential requirement of an inner order; we have carefully designed, decorated and made clean the outside of the cup; but the inside was full of extortion and excess; we used our increased knowledge and power to administer to the comforts of the body, but we left the mind impoverished".*

Islam aims at establishing an equilibrium between these two aspects of life—the material and the spiritual

*Lord Snell "The New World, Watts & Co., London, [illegible]" p. 11.

"We verily sent our Messengers with clear proofs and revealed them the Scripture and the Balance (i.e. the authority to establish justice) that mankind may observe the right measure: and We sent down iron (i.e. coercive power) wherein is mighty power and many uses of mankind and that Allah may see who helpeth Him and His Messengers though unseen. verily Allah is Potent, Mighty". (*Al-Qur'an LVII:25*)

"The command is for none but Allah: He hath commanded that ye obey none but Him: that is the right path". (*Al-Qur'an: XII:40*)

"(Muslims are) those who, if We give them power in the land, establish the systems of *Salat* (prayers and worship) and Zakat (poer-due) and enjoin virtue and forbid vice and evil". (*Al-Qur'an XXII:41*)

The Holy Prophet said:

"Every one of you is a keeper or a shepherd and will be questioned about the well-being of his flock. So, the Head of the State will be questioned about the well-being of the peopie of the State.

"Every man is a shepherd unto his family and will be answerable about the well-being of every member of it. Every woman is a shepherd unto the family of her husband and will be accountable the well-being of every member thereof. And every servant is a shepherd unto his master and will be questioned about the property of his master".

Thus even a cursory study of the teachings of Islam shows that it is an all-embracing way of life and does not leave out any field of human existence of become a play-ground for 'satanix forces'.

4. Balance between Individualism and Collectivism

Another unique feature of Islam is that it establishes a balance between individualism and collectivism. It believes in the individual personality of man and holds everyone personally responsible and accountable to God. It guarantees the fundamental rights of the individual and does

"He is not a believer who takes his fill while his neighbour starves".

"The believer in God is he who is not a danger to life and property of any other".

In short Islam neither neglects the individual nor the society; it establishes a harmony and a balance between the two and assigns to each its proper due.

5. Universalism and Humanism

The message of Islam is for the entire human race. God, in Islam, is the God of all the worlds (*Al-Qur'an I:1*) and the Prophet is a Messenger for the whole of mankind. In the words of the Qur'an: "Say: O people! I am the Messenger of God to you all" (*Al-Qur'an, VII: 158*), "A warner to all the nations" (XXV:1) and "We have not sent thee but as a mercy for all the nations" (XXI:107).

In Islam all men are equal, whatever be their colour, language, race or nationality. It addresses itself to the conscience of humanity and banishes all false barriers of race, status and wealth. There can be no denying the fact that such barriers have always existed, and do exist even today in this so-called enlightened age. Islam removed all these impediments and gave the idea of the entire humanity being one family of God. The Holy Prophet said:

"All creatures of God form the family of God and he is the best loved of God who loveth best His creatures."

"O Lord! Lord of my life and of everything in the universe! I affirm that all human beings are brothers unto one another".

"Respect God and be affectionate to the family of God."

Islam is international in its outlook and approach and does not admit barriers and distinctions based on colour, clan, blood or territory as were prevalent before the advent of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and which are rampant in different forms even in the modern age. It wants to unite the entire humanity under one banner.

and to a world torn by national rivalries and feuds, it is, therefore, a message of life and hope and of a glorious future.

6. Permanence and Change

There is no denying the fact that the elements of permanence and change co-exist in human society and culture and must remain so. Different ideologies and cultural systems have erred in leaning heavily towards anyone of them. Too much emphasis on permanence has made the system rigid and robbed it of flexibility and progress while lack of permanent values and unchanging element have generated ethical relativism, shapelessness and anarchy. What is needed is a balance between the two—a system that could simultaneously cater to the demands of permanence and change. An American Judge Mr. Justice Cardoza rightly says:

> "the greatest need of our time is a philosophy that will mediate between conflicting claims of stability and progress and supply a principle of growth".*

Islam presents an ideology which satisfies the demands of stability and change both.

Deeper reflection reveals that life is neither rigid [illegible] change, nor is it change pure and simple. The basic problems of life remain the same in all ages and climes, but the ways and means to solve them and the techniques of handling the phenomena undergo change with the passage of time. Islam provides for both.

The Qur'an and the *Sunnah* contain the eternal guidance given by the Lord of the universe. This guidance comes from God Who is free from the limitations of 'space' and 'time' and as such the principles of individual and social behaviour revealed by Him are natural and eternal. But God has given us the general principles only and has endowed man with the freedom to apply them in every age in the way suited to the spirit and conditions of that age. It is through *Ijtihad* that people of every age try to implement and apply divine guidance to the problems

*Justice Cardoza, 37, HLR. p. 279.

of their times. Thus the basic guidance is eternal and permanent while the methods of its application can change in accordance with the peculiar needs of every age. That is why Islam always remains as fresh and modern as the tomorrow morn.

7. Complete Record of Teachings Preserved

Last, but not least, is the fact that the teachings of Islam are preserved in their original form and God's Guidance is available without the change of a jot or tittle. The Qur'an is the revealed book of God which has been in existence for the last fourteen hundred years and the Word of God is available in its original form. Detailed accounts of the life of the Prophet of Islam and his teachings are available in their pristine purity. There has not been an iota of change in this unique historic record. The sayings (*Hadith*) and the entire record of the life of the Holy Prophet have been handed down to us with unprecedented precision and authenticity in works of *Hadith* and *Sunna*. Even non-Muslim critics admit this eloquent fact. Professor Reynold A. Nicholson in his **"Literary History of the Arabs"** says:

> "The Koran is an exceedingly human document, reflecting every phase of Muhammad's relationship to the outward events of his life, so that here we **have materials of unique and incontestable authority for tracing the origin and early development of Islam—such materials as do not exist in case of Budhism or Christianity or any other ancient religion"**. (P. 143)

These are some of the unique features of Islam and establish its superiority as the religion of man—the religion of today and the religion of tomorrow. These aspects have appealed to hundreds of thousands of people in the past and the present and have made them affirm that Islam is the religion of truth and the right path for mankind; and this will continue to appeal to them in the future. Men with pure hearts and sincere longings for truth will always continue to say:

"I affirm that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, that He is One with none to associate with; and I affirm that Muhammad is His servant and His Prophet".

And the following pages present the impressions of some such persons, unfolding the stories of their pilgrimage to Islam.

لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ

"There is no God except Allah Muhammad is His Prophet"

THE KA'BA

Front Page Illustration

THE COVER

Ka'ba is the Holy Mosque, situated in the heart of the city of Mecca. Muslims all the world over offer their prayers towards the Ka'ba. It is the symbol of the unity of Ummah: every individual, may he be in the East or the West or the North or the South, turns his face towards the Ka'ba to offer his prayers. The Islamic fraternity is always gravitating towards this holy centre.

Ka'ba was built by Prophet Abraham several thousand years ago and has always been revered as a holy place. Before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) pagan and polytheistic tribes of Arabia had installed three hundred and sixty idols in it. But on his

triumphant entry into Mecca in 8th year of Hijra, the Prophet of Islam cleared the holy place of all the false gods installed therein and dedicated it for the worship of One God, Allah, Who has no associate in divinity and for Whose worship Prophet Abraham had constructed it.

Ka'ba is the place which Muslims from all parts of the world visit once a year on the occasion of *Hajj* and at any other time of the year to perform *'Umra*. It is the only spot on the earth where prayers never cease. They continue round the clock. If any one wants to have the unique privilege of being the only person offering prayers at Ka'ba, he will have to wait for years and years and then too he cannot succeed. On the occasion of *Hajj* the greatest congregation of the world is held around it. It is estimated that more than one million people perform *Hajj* and an equal number visit it to perform *'Umra*. Beyond doubt, it is the greatest centre of worship on the earth.

Ka'ba is the place towards which Muslims turn their face in prayer, but it is not this building to which they offer worship. Muslims worship none but Allah. They do not believe in worshipping stones, or animals, or men. Ka'ba only symbolises the direction towards which Muslims have to keep their face in prayers, signifying that Muslims all the world over are like the circumference of a circular which has one and only one centre. It is a symbol and not an object of worship in itself.

Near Ka'ba is situated the famous historic well of *Zam-Zam*, which sprang forth some five thousand years ago on the occasion Ismail and Hajira, the son and the wife of Prophet Abraham, panted for water in the desert of Arabia. Through this well is built up the prosperity of Mecca. And what is more important the water of this well is being used all the twelve months of the year and by people all over the world. The well is catering to the need of millions of people and knows no exhaustion.

in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

In the above-quoted passages Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is evidently foretold. For God declared to all the Israelites that He would raise up a Prophet from among their brethren. Now we hesitate not to affirm that it is impossible that the phrase "brethren of Israel," could have any other meaning that that of Ishmaelites and these never had any prophet but Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is admitted both by Jews and Christians that revelations to the Israelitish Prophets were not made in the very words as given in the Scriptures, but only their purport, which they afterwards delivered to the people in their own language. But the Holy Quran, on the contrary, revealed to prophet Muhammad word by word as it now is a fact which makes the expression "and will put My words in his mouth" inapplicable to anyone except Muhammad (peace be upon him).

In promising to raise up a prophet God tells Moses that "I will raise up a prophet from among their brethren." But we find in Deut 34:10 that there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses. There cannot then remain a single doubt but that the promised prophet must have been from among the Ishmaelites, the brethren of the Israelites.

ANOTHER PROPHECY OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH (ORIGINAL HEBREW TEXT)

685 JESAIA CAP. 21.22.

Isaiah xxi. 7.

685 JESAIA CAP. 21. 22 כא כב

7 וראה רכב
צמד פרשים רכב חמור רכב גמל והקשיב קשב רב־
קשב:

Isaiah xxi, 7.

Translation

"He saw two riders one of them was a rider upon an ass and the other a rider upon a camel, he hearkened diligently with much heed" (Isaiah xxi: 7)

Isaiah saw in a vision two riders, one of them was a rider upon an ass and the other a rider upon a camel. In our opinion the above passage is the faithful rendering of the original Hebrew. In the English Bible, however, it is thus translated: "He saw a chariot of asses and a chariot of camels, etc."

The Vulgate has it as follows: "He saw a chariot of two horsemen, a rider upon an ass and a rider upon a camel, etc."

There can be no doubt that of the two riders represented by the Prophet Isaiah, as being the restorers of the true worship of the Godhead, the rider upon the ass is Jesus Christ, because he so made his entry into Jerusalem, and that by the rider of a camel is meant the prophet of Arabia, of which country the camel is characteristic of conveyance.

Hikko Mamittadim Vikullo Mahamadim Zehdudi Verem Raai Benute Yapus Halam.

The English translation thereof is as follows —

His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is Mohammad altogether lovely. This is my beloved and this is my friend. O daughter of Jerusalem " (Song of Solomon 5.16)

King Soloman has named the Prophet that was to come "Mohammadim". In Hebrew the suffix 'la' is used to express respect as the term 'Eloha' which means 'God' is mentioned in Bible as "Elohim". It is thus clear that Soloman has quite distinctly mentioned the name of the Prophet that was to come as "Mohammad". But an error is made, intentionally or un-intentionally, by translation of the proper name as "Altogether Lovely". Even the translation 'Altogether Lovely' is a befitting attribute of the Holy Prophet, as mentioned in the words of Hadith. The Hebrew words in Roman script are as follows:

PROPHECIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Ahmad of Messiah

Original Greek Text

15 Ἐὰν ἀγαπᾶτέ με, τὰς ἐντολὰς τὰς ἐμὰς τηρήσετε.
16 κἀγὼ ἐρωτήσω τὸν Πατέρα καὶ ἄλλον Παράκλητον
17 δώσει ὑμῖν ἵνα ᾖ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα,

Ταῦτα λελάληκα ὑμῖν παρ' ὑμῖν 25 μένων· ὁ δὲ Παράκλητος, τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον 26 ὃ πέμψει ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν ἐγώ.

7 ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω ὑμῖν, συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω. ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ ἀπέλθω, ὁ Παράκλητος οὐ μὴ ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς· ἐὰν δὲ πορευθῶ, πέμψω αὐτὸν πρὸς

8 ὑμᾶς. καὶ ἐλθὼν ἐκεῖνος ἐλέγξει τὸν κόσμον
περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ περὶ
9 κρίσεως· περὶ ἁμαρτίας μέν, ὅτι οὐ πιστεύουσιν
10 εἰς ἐμέ· περὶ δικαιοσύνης δέ, ὅτι πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα·
11 ὑπάγω καὶ οὐκέτι θεωρεῖτέ με· περὶ δὲ κρίσεως,
12 ὅτι ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου κέκριται. Ἔτι
πολλὰ ἔχω ὑμῖν λέγειν, ἀλλ' οὐ δύνασθε βαστά-
13 ζειν ἄρτι· ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς
ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἀλήθειαν πᾶσαν·
οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ' ὅσα ἀκούει λα-
14 λήσει, καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

Translation

John 14:15.—"If ye love me ye will keep my commandments. v. 16. And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Parakletos (Comforter) that he may be with you for ever. v. 25. These things have I spoken unto you while yet abiding with you. v. 26 But the Comforter (Parakletos) which is the spirit of truth whom the Father will send in my name he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I said unto you."

John 16:7.— "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter (Parakletos) will not come unto you, but if I go, I will send him unto you. v. 8. And he, when he is come, will convict the world is respect of sin and of righteousness and of Judgement. v. 12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. v. 13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth for he shall not speak from himself, but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come"

It is a well-known fact that a person was expected by a great number of Christians in accordance with the

prophecy from a very early period, which shows that the construction put on the passage in the Acts by Roman Church and by Protestants was not general.

PROPHECIES IN HINDU SCRIPTURES

Likewise in Hindu scriptures too there are a good many prophecies about the Holy Prophet Muhammad. A few of these are in the Puranas. The one in the Bhavishya Purana is the clearest of all. The fifth word from left to right is the name of our Holy Prophet. It gives even the name of the country of the Prophet "Marusthalnivasinan denizen of the desert (Arabia)". For this reason the Arya Samaj has tried to cast doubt on the authenticity of this Purana. Their argument is that it contains a reference to the Prophet. According to Sanatanist Pandits and the vast bulk of Hindus, nevertheless, it is considered very authentic. The prophecy runs as follows.

Original Sanskrit Text

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे म्लेच्छ आचार्येण समन्वितः ।

महामद इति ख्यातः शिष्यशाखासमन्वितः ॥ ५ ॥

नृपश्चैव महादेवं मरुस्थलनिवासिनम् ।

गङ्गाजलैश्च संस्नाप्य पञ्चगव्यसमन्वितैः ।

चंदनादिभिरभ्यर्च्य तुष्टाव मनसा हरम् ॥ ६ ॥

भोजराज उवाच—नमस्ते गिरिजानाथ मरुस्थलनिवासिने ।

त्रिपुरासुरनाशाय बहुमायाप्रवर्त्तिने ॥ ७ ॥

म्लेच्छैर्गुप्ताय शुद्धाय सच्चिदानन्दरूपिणे ।

त्वं मां हि किङ्करं विद्धि शरणार्थमुपागतम् ॥ ८ ॥

ORIGINAL SANSKRIT TEXT.

॥ अथर्ववेदे २०।१२७ ॥

॥ अथ कुन्तापसूक्तानि ॥

इदं जना उप श्रुत नराशंस स्तविष्यते । ॥१२७

षष्टिं सहस्रा नवतिं च कौरम आ रुशमेषु दद्महे ॥१॥

उष्ट्रा यस्य प्रवाहणो वधूमन्तो द्विर्दश ।

वर्ष्मा रथस्य नि जिहीडते दिव ईषमाणा उपस्पृशः ॥२॥

एष इषाय मामहे शतं निष्कान्दश स्रजः ।

त्रीणि शतान्यर्वतां सहस्रा दश गोनाम् ॥३॥ (१)

Translation

O people, listen this emphatically! the man of Praise (Muhammad) will be raised among the people. We take the emigrant in our shelter from sixty thousand and ninety enemies whose conveyances are twenty camels and she camels, whose loftiness of position touches the heaven and lowers it.

He gave to Mamah Rishi hundred of gold coins, ten circles, three hundred Arab horses and ten thousand cows.

Atharva Veda, Kanda 20, Sukta 127, Mantra 1-3

PROPHECY IN THE PARSI SCRIPTURE

The Parsi religion is one of the oldest religions in the world, perhaps as old as if not older than the Hindu religion. It has two collections of Scriptures—the Dasatir and the Zand Avasta, which may be called respectively the Old and the New Testaments of the Parsi religion. In Dasatir, No. 14, which is associated with the name of Sasanil, there is not only a corroboration of the Doctrines and the Teachings of Islam, but a clear prophecy as to the Advent of the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophecy is made in the clearest terms, and is preceded by a vision of a state of extreme disorder and demoralization in Persia. It runs thus:

Original Pahlavi

چم چیم کاجام کند هروار جیام ور ناه جیال بود بوهزار شاام هوهیزاک

و نیرناکت و سمبراکت و ابراکت اسرویم اند ❀ و هوند هرورکنام نیودام ❀

بیرن فه شای بنار و سیمار کوار آبادلی جوار هه ه نیوستا ❀

و مدرا بندشای سیمارام مدیر و انتورام ام و خنود و نیواکت و شایام انشناد ❀

Modern Persian

چون چنین کارها کنند [illegible]

Translation

"When the Persians should sink so low in morality, a man will be born in Arabia whose followers will upset their throne, religion and everything. The mighty stiff-necked ones of Persia will be overpowered. The house which was built (referring to Abraham building the Kaaba) and in which many Idols have been placed will be purged of idols, and people will say their prayers facing towards it. His followers will capture the towns of the Parsis and Taus and Balkh and other big places round about. People will embroil with one another. The wise men of Persia and others will join his followers."

This prophecy is contained in a book which has ever been in the hends of the Parsis, and its words to not admit of two interpretations. The coming man is to be an Arab. The Persians would join his faith. Fire temples would be destroyed. Idols would be removed. People would say their prayers facing towards the Ka'ba. Can this prophecy fit in with any person other than Muhammad?

CONCLUSION

Thus if, on the one hand, the holy Prophet Muhammad testified to the truth of all the other Prophets, belonging to all the different nations of the world, and made it a part of his religion, on the other hand, the Scriptures of these previous Prophets are found to contain clear prophecies about the advent of our holy Prophet Muhammad (the Peace and the Blessings of God be upon him). This mutual corroboration, by furnishing a great evidence of the spiritual providence of God for humanity, strengthens people's faith in religion in general, and in the religion of Islam in particular and accept Islam as the final undistorted message of God to be followed by mankind replacing old scriptures which suffered tragic faith at hands of those whom the Holy Qur'an described as" SŪRAH II

79. Therefore woe be unto those who write the Scripture with their hands and then say, "This is from Allah," that they may purchase a small gain therewith. Woe unto them for that their hands have written, and woe unto them for that they earn thereby.

174. Lo! those who hide aught of the Scripture which Allah hath revealed, and purchase a small gain therewith, they eat into their bellies nothing else than fire. Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He make them grow. Theirs will be a painful doom.

WHAT CHRISTIAN AUTHORITIES SAY ABOUT THE MYTH OF GOD INCARNATE

GOSPEL MASKED IN GREEK PHILOSOPHY

The mask acquires a life of its own—the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, infallibility, and all propositions seconding these dogmas, were the product of historic decisions and of situations that might have turned out quite differently... nevertheless... early or late, product or reshaping force, this dogma remains what it has been from the beginning, a bad habit of intellectualization which the Christian picked up from the Greek when he fled from the Jews[1]

1. Outline of the History of Dogma, Adolf Harnack p.20

CONFLICT BETWEEN ESTABLISHED CHURCHES

Thus Theodore Zahan, for instance, illustrates the bitter conflicts within the established Churches. He points out that the Roman Catholics accuse the Greek Orthodox Church of remodelling the text of the holy Scriptures by additions and subtractions with good and bad intentions, the Greeks in turn point out that the Catholics themselves in places depart very far from the original text, and, in spite of their differences, they combine to accuse the non-conformist Christians of deviating from "the true way" and condemn them as heretics, and the heretics in their turn accuse the Catholics of "having reconned the Truth like forgers". He concludes, "Do not facts support these accusations?"[1]

BY TERRORIZATION WE DRIVE MEN TO BELIEVE

The ancients philosophised very little about divine things. Formerly faith was in life rather than in profession of creeds. When faith came to be in writings rather than in hearts, then there were almost as many faiths as men. Articles increased and sincerity decreased. Contentions grew hot and love grew cold. The doctrine of Christ which at first knew no hair-splitting came to depend on the aid of philosophy. This was the first stage in the decline of the Church.

Thus the Church was forced to explain what could not be expressed in words, and recourse was taken by both sides [illegible] the support of the Emperor. Erasmus, commenting on this, continued:

The injection of the authority of the Emperor into this affair did not greatly aid the sincerity of faith [illegible]. When faith is in the mouth other than in the heart, when the solid knowledge of sacred Scriptures fails us, nevertheless by terrorization we drive men to believe what they do not believe, to love what they do not love, to know what they do not know. That which is forced cannot be sincere.[2]

1. Articles of the Apostolic Creed, Theodore Zahn.
2. Erasmi Epistolae, 1334 ed., P.S. Allen, V, pp. 173-92.

DUE TO PAUL DISCONTINUITY WITH HISTORICAL JESUS

...the discontinuity between the historical Jesus and the Christ of the Church became so great that any unity between them is scarcely recognisable.[1]

PAULINE HERESY BECAME CHRISTIANITY

The Pauline heresy became the foundation of Christian orthodoxy and the legitimate Church was disowned as heretical.[2]

THE FOLLOWING EXTRACTS FROM OTHER BIBLES BEARING TESTIMONIES TO THE QUR'ANIC TRUTH THAT JESUS IS NOT GOD.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know.—(ACTS 2:22)

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God.

(REVELATION 19:10)

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak.—(JOHN 12:29).

I can of my own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgement is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.—(JOHN 5:20—31)

...for my Father is greater than I.—(JOHN 14:28)

And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent. (JOHN 17:3)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than He that sent him. —(JOHN 13:16)

1. Quoted in The Jesus Report, Johannes Lehmann p. 27

2. Quoted in The Jesus Report, Johannes Lehmann p. 28

MUHAMMAD ASAD

(Austria)

(Statesman, Journalist and Author)

"But, O Prophet, after you have gone fresh circumstances may arise which could not have arisen during thy earthly lifetime; what are we to do then? And what are they to do who follow us?"

The Prophet slowly raised his illustrious and saintly head, and with the lurid light of prophecy and inspiration beaming radiantly from his noble eyes exclaimed: "Allah hath given to every man as a personal monitor, a conscience and as a guide, his reason; then, use them in respect of all things and Allah's blessing will ever guide you aright."

The late PROFESSOR HAROUN MUSTAPHA LEON, M.A., Ph.D., LL.D., F.S.P., accepted Islam in 1882. He was a Fellow and Honorary Member of many learned societies in Europe and America. He was an able philologist and was for some time contributing a series of articles on the "Etymology of Manx Language" to the "Isle of Man Examiner". His services to this important branch of science had frequently been recognised by learned bodies. The Potomac University (U.S.A.) conferred upon him the degree of M.A. Dr. Leon was also an eminent geologist. He frequently lectured on scientific and literary subjects before learned and other societies. He occupied the important position of Secretary-General of "La Societe International de Philologie, Sciences et Beaux-Arts" (founded 1875) and was the Editor of "The Philomathe" a scientific magazine, published from London. Dr. Leon received many decoration from Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan, the late Shah and the Emperor of Austria.

ALI SELMAN BENOIST

(France)

Doctor of Medicine

As a Doctor of Medicine, and a descendant of a French Catholic family, the very choice of my profession has given me a solid scientific culture which had prepared me very little for a mystic life. Not that I did believe in God, but that the dogmas and rites of Christianity in general and of Catholicism in particular never permitted me to feel His presence. Thus my unitary sentiment for

God forbade my accepting the dogma of the Trinity, and consequently of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Without yet knowing Islam, I was already believing in the first part of the *Kalima, La ilaha illa'l-Lah* (There is but One God), and in these verses of the Qur'an:

So, it was first of all for metaphysical reasons that I adhered to Islam. Other reasons, too, prompted me to do that. For instance, my refusal to accept Catholic priests, who, more or less, claim to possess on behalf of God the power of forgiving the sins of men. Further, I could never admit the Catholic rite of communion, by means of the host (or holy bread), representing the body of Jesus Christ, a rite which seems to me to belong to totemistic practices of primitive peoples, where the body of the ancestral totem, the taboo of the living ones, had to be consumed after his death, in order better to assimilate his personality. Another point which moved me away fromChristianity was the absolute silence which it maintains regarding bodily cleanliness, particularly before prayers, which has always seemed to me to be an outrage against God. For if He has given us a soul He has also given us a body, then we have no right to neglect. The same silence could be observed, and this time mixed with hostility with regard to the physiological life of the human being, whereas on this point Islam seemed to me to be the only religion in accord with human nature.

The essential and definite element of my conversion to Islam was the Qur'an. I began to study it, before my conversion, with the critical spirit of a Western intellectual, and I owe much to the magnificent work of Mr. Malek Bennabi, entitled **Le Phenomene Coranique**, which convinced me of its being divinely revealed. There are certain verses of this book, the Qur'an, revealed more than thirteen centuries ago, which teach exactly the same notions as the most modern scientific researches do. This definitely converted me and converted me to the second part of the *Kalima, 'Muhammad al-Rasul'al-Lah'* (Muhammad is the Messenger of God).

This was my reason for presenting myself on 20th February, 1953 at the Mosque in Paris, where I declared my faith in Islam and was registered there as a Muslim by the Mufti of the Paris Mosque, and was given the Islamic name of 'Ali Selman'.

I am very happy in my new faith, and proclaim once again:

> "I bear witness that there is but one God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is God's servant and Messenger."

DR. UMAR ROLF BARON EHRENFELS

(Austria)

Professor of Anthropology

The essential features of Islam which impressed me most and attracted me to this great religion are as follows :—

(1) The Islamic teaching of successive revelation implies in my opinion the following. The source from which all the great world religions sprang is one. The founders of these great paths, prepared for peace-seeking mankind, gave witness to one and the same basic divine teaching.

(2) Islam, in essence, means peace in submission to the Eternal Law.

(3) Islam is, historically speaking, the last founded among the great world religions on this planet.

(4) Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Islam and is thus the last in the sequence of great religious world-prophets.

(5) The acceptance of Islam and the path of the Muslims by a member of an elder religion thus means as little rejection of his former religion, as for instance the acceptance of Buddha's teachings meant the rejection of Hinduism to the Indian co-nationals of Buddha. It was only later that schools of thought within Hinduism rejected the Buddhist way as heretical. These differences

of religions are man-made. The unity is divine. The teachings of the Holy Qur'an stress this basic unity. To witness it, means acceptance of a spiritual act which is common to all men and women.

(6) The spirit of human brotherhood under the all encompassing divine fatherhood is much stressed in Islam and not hampered by concepts of racialism or sectarianism, be it of linguistic, historic, traditionalistic, or even dogmatic nature.

(7) This concept of divine fatherly love, however, includes also the motherly aspect of Divine love, as the two principal epithets of God indicate: *Al-Rahman Al-Rahim*, both being derived from the Arabic root rhm. The symbolic meaning of this root equals Goethe's Das Ewing-Weibliche Zieht uns hinan, whilst its primary meaning is womb.

In this spirit the Prophet gave these unforgettable words to his followers:

"Paradise lies at the feet of the Mother."

Born as the only son of the late Baron Christian Ehrenfels, the founder of the modern structural (Gestalt) Psychology in Austria, Rolf Freiherr von Ehrenfels felt already as a child a deep attraction towards the East in general and towards the world of Islam in particular. His sister, the Austrian poetess Imma von Bodmershof, describes this phase in her contribution to Islamic Literature, Lahore (1953). As a young man Ehrenfels travelled in the Balkan countries and Turkey, where he used to join prayers in Mosques, (though a Christian) and was hospitably accepted by Turkish, Albanian, Greek and Yugoslav Muslims. His interest in Islam increased by and by and Ehrenfels accepted Islam in 1927 and took on Umar as his Muslim name. He visited Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent in 1932 and took particular interest in the cultural-historical problems connected with the status and position of women. After his return to Austria, Baron Umar specialised in the study of anthropological problems of Matrilineal Civilisations in India. The Oxford University Press published his first anthropological book (Usmania University Series, Hyderabad Deccan, December, 1941) on this subject.

When Austria was overrun by the Nazis in 1938, Baron Umar again went to India worked in Hyderabad

DR. HAMID MARCUS

(Germany)

Scientist, Author and Journalist

As a child I had felt an inner urge to learn all I could about Islam, and I had carefully studied an old Qur'an translation which I had found in the library of my home town and which dated back to 1750. It was the edition from which Goethe also drew his knowledge of Islam. At that time I had been deeply struck by the absolutely rationalistic and at the same time imposing composition of the Islamic teachings. I had also been very much impressed by the gigantic spiritual revelation which they evoked in the Islamic nations of that time. Later, in Berlin, I had the opportunity of working together with Muslims and listening to the enthusiastic and inspiring commentaries which the founder of the first German Muslim Mission at Berlin and builder of the Berlin Mosque, gave on the Holy Qur'an. After years of active co-operation with this outstanding personality and his spiritual exertions, I embraced Islam. Islam supplemented my own ideas by some of the most impressive conceptions of mankind ever thought of. The belief in God is something sacred to the religion of Islam. But it does not proclaim dogmas which are incompatible with modern science. Therefore, there are no conflicts between belief on the one hand and science on the other. This fact is naturally a unique and enormous advantage for a man who participated to the best of his abilities in scientific research. The second advantage is that the religion of Islam is not an idealistic teaching which runs along blindly beside life as it is, but that it preaches a system which actually influences the life of a human being ... the laws of Islam are not compulsory regulations which restrict personal freedom, but directions and guides which enable a well-contrived freedom.

Throughout the years I have noticed time and again with deepest satisfaction that Islam holds the

golden mean between individualism and socialism, between which it forms a connecting link. As it is unbiased and tolerant, it always appreciates the good, wherever it may happen to come across it.

Dr. HAMID MARCUS was also the editor of Moslemische Revue, Berlin.

COL. DONALD S. ROCKWELL

(U.S.A.)

Poet, Critic and Author

The simplicity of Islam, the powerful appeal and the compelling atmosphere of its Mosques, the earnestness of its faithful adherents, the confidence inspiring realization of the millions throughout the world who answer the five daily calls to prayer—these factors attracted me from the first. But after I had determined to become a follower of Islam, I found many deeper reasons for confirming my decision. The mellow concept of life—fruit of the Prophet's combined course of action and contemplation—the wise counsel, the admonitions to charity and mercy, the broad humanitarianism, the pioneer declaration of woman's property rights—these and other factors of the teachings of the Man of Mecca were to me among the most obvious evidence of a practical religion so tersely and so aptly epitomised in the cryptic words of Muhammad, 'Trust in God and tie your camel.' He gave us a religious system of normal action, not blind faith in the protection of an unseen force in spite of our own neglect, but confidence that if we do all things rightly and to the best of our ability, we may trust what comes as the Will of God.

The broadminded tolerance of Islam for other religions recommends it to all lovers of liberty. Muhammad

admonished his followers to treat well the believers in the Old and New Testaments, and Abraham, Moses and Jesus are acknowledged as Prophets of the One God. Surely this is generous and far in advance of the attitude of other religions.

The total freedom from idolatry ... is a sign of the salubrious strength and purity of the Muslim faith.

The original teachings of the Prophet of God have not been engulfed in the maze of changes and additions of doctrinarians. The Qur'an remains as it came to the corrupt polytheistic people of Muhammad's time, changeless as the holy heart of Islam itself.

Moderation and temperance in all things, the keynotes of Islam, won my unqualified approbation. The health of his people was cherished by the Prophet, who enjoined them to observe strict cleanliness and specified fasts and to subordinate carnal appetites. ... when I stood in the inspiring Mosques of Istanbul, Damascus, Jerusalem, Cairo, Algiers, Tangier, Fez and other cities, I was conscious of a powerful reaction the potent uplift of Islam's simple appeal to the sense of higher things, unaided by elaborate trappings, ornamentations, figures, pictures, music and ceremonial ritual. The Mosque is a place of quiet contemplation and self-effacement in the greater reality of the One God.

The democracy of Islam has always appealed to me. Potentate and pauper have the same rights on the floor of the Mosque, on their knees in humble worship. There are no rented pews nor special reserved seats.

The Muslim accepts no man as a mediator between himself and his God. He goes direct to the invisible source of creation and life, God, without reliance on saving formula of repentance of sins and belief in the power of a teacher to afford him salvation.

The universal brotherhood of Islam, regardless of race, politics, colour or country, has been brought home to me most keenly many times in my life and this is another feature which draws me towards the Faith.

MR. R. L. MELLEMA

(Holland)

Anthropologist, Writer and Scholar

What is for me the beauty of Islam?
What has attracted me to this faith?

I began with my study of Eastern languages at the University of Leiden in 1919 and attended the lectures of Prof. C. Snouck Hurgronje, well known Arabist. I learned Arabic, read and translated al-Baidawi's commentary on the Qur'an and al-Ghazali's reflexions on the Law. I studied the history and institutions of Islam from European handbooks as was usual at that time. In 1921 I stayed in Cairo for one month and visited the al-Azhar. Besides Arabic I studied other languages such as Sanskrit, Malay and Javanese. In 1927 I left for the then Netherlands Indies to teach Javanese language and Indian cultural history at a special Secondary School for advanced studies in Jogjakarta. For 15 years I specialised myself in Javanese languages and culture (modern and old) and had little contact with Islam and no contact at all with Arabic. After a difficult period which I spent as a Japanese prisoner of war I went back to the Netherlands in 1946 and found a new task at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. Here I had the opportunity to take up again my study of Islam, being instructed to write a short guide on Islam in Java.

I started to study the new Islamic State of Pakistan which was culminated in a journey to Pakistan in the winter of 1954-55. Having come to know Islam till now from European writers only, in Lahore, I was confronted with quite another aspect of Islam. I asked my Muslim friends to be allowed to take part with them in the Friday prayers in the Mosques and from now on I began to discover the great values of Islam.

I have felt myself a Muslim from the moment that I had to address the people in one of the Lahore Mosques

I will try to give a short answer on these questions in 6 points:

1. The acknowledgement of One Supreme Being, uncomplicated and easy to accept by every reasonable thinking creature: Allah is He on Whom all depend. He begets not, nor is He begotten and none is like Him. He represents the highest wisdom, the highest strength and the highest beauty. His Charity and Mercy are unbounded.

2. The relation between the Creator of the Universe and His creatures, of which man has been entrusted with the supreme direction, is a direct one. The believer does not need any mediation; Islam does not need priesthood. In Islam contact with God depends on man himself. Man has to prepare himself in this life for the next. He is responsible for his deeds, which cannot be compensated by a substituting sacrifice of an innocent person. No soul shall be burdened beyond its capacity.

3. The doctrine of tolerance of Islam is so clearly manifested in the well-known words: *There is no compulsion in religion*. A Muslim is recommended to search for the truth where he may find it; else he is enjoined to estimate the good properties of other religions.

4. The doctrine of brotherhood of Islam extends to all human beings, no matter what colour, race or creed. Islam is the only religion which has been able to realise this doctrine in practice. Muslims, wherever on the world they are, will recognise each other as brothers. The equality of the whole of mankind before God is symbolised significantly in the *Ihram* dress during the Hajj.

5. The fact that Islam accepts matter and mind both as existing values. The mental growth of man is connected inseparably with the needs of the body, whereas man has to behave in such a way that mind

prevails over matter and matter is controlled by mind.

6. The prohibition of alcoholic drinks and narcotic drugs. This in particular is a point in respect of which it may be said that Islam is far ahead of its time.

•

Dr. R. L. Mellema is the Head of the Islamic Section of the Tropical Museum, Amsterdam, and is the author of "Wayang Puppets, Grondwet van Pakistan, Ein Interpretatie van de Islam, etc

SAIFUDDIN DIRK WALTER MOSIG

(U.S.A.)

I was born in a German Christian family during the most ferocious part of World War II, at Berlin, in 1943. My family moved first to Spain, during the same year, and later, in 1948, to Argentina. There I stayed for 15 years. I attended my grade and high school at the Roman Catholic "La Salle" school, in Cordoba, Argentine. As was to be expected, I became very soon a fervent Catholic. I was lectured over an hour daily on Catholic religion and I often attended religious services. At twelve, my dream was to become a Roman Catholic priest. I was completely committed to the Christian faith.

Allah observed my folly, and one memorable day, nearly seven years ago, He permitted that a copy of Spanish translation of the Holy Qur'an reached my hands. My father did not object my reading it, as he supposed that it would only contribute to give me a broader background, and nothing else. He was far from guessing the effect the words of Allah were going to exert on my mind.... As I opened the Holy Book, I was a fanatic Roman Catholic; as I closed it, I was completely committed to Islam.

Obviously, my opinion of Islam was not favourable one before I read the Holy Qur'an. I took the Holy Book

with curiosity, and opened it with scorn, expecting to find in it horrible errors, blasphemies, superstitions and contradictions. I was biased, but I was also very young and my heart had no time to harden completely yet. I went through the Surah reluctantly at the beginning, eagerly then, and finally with a desperate thirst for Truth. Then, in the greatest moment of my life, Allah gave me His guidance and led me from superstition to Truth, from darkness to Light, from Christianity to Islam. In the blessed pages of the Holy Qur'an I found solution to all my problems, satisfaction to all my needs, explanation for all my doubts. Allah attracted me to His Light with irresistible strength, and I gladly yielded to Him. Everything seemed clear now, everything made sense to me, and I began to understand myself, the Universe and Allah. I was bitterly aware that I had been deceived by my dearest teachers, and that their words were only cruel lies, whether they were aware of it or not. My whole world was shattered in one instant; all concepts had to be revised. But the bitterness in my heart was amply superseded by the ineffable joy of having found my Lord at last, and I was filled with love and gratitude to Him. I still humbly praise and bless Him for His Mercy with me; without His help, I would have remained in darkness and stupidity forever.

Shivered with joy and enthusiasm, I hurried to communicate my findings to other people, to my parents, to my schoolmates, to my instructors... I wanted everybody to know the Truth, to be free of ignorance and prejudice, to feel the joy I felt. I met a fortress surrounding them, a thick wall separating them from the Truth. And I was not able to remove that rampart, because it was in their hearts, harder than stone. I was received with scorn and persecution, unable to understand the blindness of my persecutors. I learned that only Allah can give Light.

The more I learned, the more I felt compelled to express my gratitude to Allah for having lead me to Islam, the Ideal Religion.

I have read sacred Scriptures of every religion; nowhere have I found what I encountered in Islam: perfection. The Holy Qur'an, compared to any other Scripture I have read, is like the light of the Sun compared to that of a match. I firmly believe that anybody who reads the Word of Allah with a mind that is not completely closed to Truth, will become a Muslim, if Allah pleases. He will also travel from darkness to Light . . .

May Allah grant His Guidance to all the sincere seekers of Truth. The arms of Islam are open to receive them in the heart of a community called by Allah Himself "the best people that were ever raised for the benefit of mankind."

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Universe!

SAYINGS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD
(May Allah's peace and blessings be on him)

He who leaveth home in search of knowledge walketh in the path of Allah.
Allah is gentle and loves gentleness.

SECTION III

WOMEN AT THE THRESH-HOLD OF ISLAM

What Islam Means to me

MARYAM JAMEELAH BEGUM.

Ever since the days of my early childhood, my life has been dominated by a religious outlook. This does not ever exclude my adolescence and early youth when, due to my disillusionment with the established Jewish synagogue and Christian churches I professed atheism for even then my life was religious in the sense that I was always in search of the absolute Truth which alone gives human life its meaning, direction and purpose. I am convinced beyond doubt that faith in transcendental theological, moral, social and legal values is one of the demarcations between the materialistic and spiritual view of life. The purpose of all materialists and materialistic societies whether past or present, is temporal happiness, pleasure, and enjoyment. The emphasis of the materialist every where is always on the transitory and how to extract the maximum pleasure, enjoyment and thrills of the moment. Chanbe is worshipped as a value for its own sake. The moment a person asks one's self about Ultimate truths, about the meaning, purpose and direction of life and death and what will happen after death, one enters the exclusive precincts of religion in which the physical sciences are powerless to help us. Materialists are always concerned with the transitory and the temporary while a genuine spiritual outlook always emphasises the absolute and eternal. I think almost all the problems we are facing today in the terrible universal moral degeneration, social disintegration and the dehumanization of our relationships with our family, friends and acquaintances, can be directly traced to the absence of Fidelity to transcendental values, standards

---

Formerly an American Lady now in Pakistan, convert to Islam from Judaism author of "Islam and the west", and "Islam and Modernism

and ideals. The decadence of contemporary arts and culture is also due to the same cause. Modern man is in desperate need of faith and implicit obedience in a Supreme Authority to be able to distinguish between what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong, what is beautiful and what is ugly and most crucial, what things in life are important and what are not. Only divine transcendental absolute law and morality can command universal respect, reverence, fear and obedience. Secular laws cannot possibly do this for how can people respect what may be rejected by a vote of the people as absolete tomorrow? The authority of Islamic morals and laws, proceeds from Almighty Allah. Thus they are feared, esteemed, loved and obeyed simultaneously. Islamic commandments combine the internal sanctions of fear of Allah and His retribution in the Hereafter with severe but just corporal punishments for violation of those laws on which the health of both the individual and society depend. I have never regarded "change" as a virtue in itself. To me, the absence of permanence and stability in anything means the outright denial of the value of human existence and makes life frivolous, superficial and meaningless. My quest was always after absolutes.

Neither Judaism nor Christianity could satisfy me. I was repelled by the narrow parochial-mindedness of the synagogue and a faith severely impoverished by constant appeal to nationalist and racist sentiments and horrified by the atrocities of Zionism against the indigenous Arabs of Palestine which are justified, glorified and praised even by the most religious-minded Jews. I could never reconcile myself to the complicated, incomprehensible theology of the Christians and the endless compromises of the Church with moral, social, political and economic evils which accounts for the unparallelled dark historical record of the Church in Europe during the period of its ascendancy. As a child growing up in New York during

the sourse of what Jewish training I received, it was but natural for me to be curious about the faith historically most closely akin to Judaism. I found that I could learn about the Arabs without also learning about Islam and its civilization and as soon as I discovered that it was not the Arabs who had made Islam great but the other way around, I wanted to know as much about this faith as I could. The superiority of the Qur'an over the Bible to me lay in its all-embracing universality in contrast to the narrow, rigid, nationalism of the Jewish scriptures which is one of the reasons, why Jews to this day have never been able to outgrow their tribal mentality. As this broad, allen-compassing universality in approach makes for the superior morality, it has exerted a drastic effect on the historical development of these faiths and the civilizations shaped by them.

Only in Islam was my quest for absolute values satisfied. Only in Islam did I at last find all that was true, good and beautiful and which gives meaning and direction to human life and death while in other religions, the Truth is deformed, distorted, restricted and fragmentary. If anyone chooses to ask me, how I came to know this, I can only reply that my personal life experience was sufficient to convince me. My adherence to the Islamic faith is thus a calm, cool, but very intense conviction. Unlike some other converts, I never saw the Holy Prophet during sleep at night in dreams. I never experienced my mystical visions and nothing dramatic at the time of my conversion ever happened. Since I have, I believe, always been a Muslim at heart and by temperament, even before I knew there was any such thing as Islam, my conversion was mainly formality, involving no radical change in my heart at all, but rather only making official what I had been thinking and yearning for many years.

For the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and all the great and genuine Muslims

after him, the purpose of life was achievement-not enjoyment. Pleasure and happiness in Islam are but the natural by-products of emotional satisfaction in one's duties conscientiously performed for the pleasure of Allah to achieve salvation in the life to come. In Islam, duties are always stressed above rights. In the materialistic world, achievement is equated with the capturing of political or economic power, fulfillment in the arts, sciences or professions and acquiring fame through these if one be exceptionally gifted, or enjoying an ample income from business, the professions or commerce. In Islam, achievement is rated on accomplishing what is enduring and worthwhile through benevolent useful and productive work, no matter how humble it may be, and to refrain from wasting one's time in empty self-gratification disgraced by sinful deeds. To the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his Companions, depth of experience was always more important than breadth. In the fast pace of modern, mechanized living where to be active and always on the run are in themselves prized as virtues and meditation and contemplation in solitude scorned as worse than useless, the experience of modern men and women may be broad and varied, yet their minds remain superficial, fickle and shallow. To those who suppose that stern religious, moral and social commandments of the Shari'ah or sacred Islamic law based on Qur'an and Sunnah, means a poor, limited and restricted life, I will point out to them from personal experience that many western affluent people are miserable and unhappy even though they can do virtually anything they please. They enjoy the highest standard of living in history, they are the best-dressed, best groomed, best-fed, best-housed men and women anywhere with the least drudgery, they have the most freedom, the greatest variety of interesting social contacts, are unexcelled in the extent of their secular education, have the widest possible chance to

enrich their self-indulgence and can do whatever they want. yet despite all these material advantages and opportunities, too many modern people are restless, dissatisfied, and even neurotic.

As a Muslim, the immediate purpose of my life is is *not to waste it!* The ultimate, long-range purpose of myself and any genuine Muslim is to attain through implicit obedience to Qur'an and Sunnah, the pleasure and acceptance of Allah and eternal salvation in the Life Hereafter.

LADY EVELYN ZEINAB COBBOLD
(England)

I am often asked when and why I became a Muslim? I can only reply that I do not know the precise moment when the truth of Islam dawned upon me. It seems that I have always been a Muslim. This is not so strange when one remembers that Islam is the natural religion that a child, left to itself, would develop. Indeed as a Western critic once described it, "Islam is the religion of common sense."

The more I read and the more I studied, the more convinced I became that Islam was the most practical religion, and the one most calculated to solve the world's many perplexing problems, and to bring to humanity peace and happiness. Since then I have never wavered in my belief that there is but one God, that Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and others (peace be on all of them) were Prophets, divinely inspired, that to every nation God has sent an apostle, that we are not born in sin, and that we do not need any redemption, that we do not need anyone to intercede between us and God, Whom we can approach at all times, and that no one can intercede for us, not even Muhammad or Jesus, and that our salvation depends entirely on ourselves and on our actions.

The word 'Islam' means surrender to God. It also means peace. A Muslim is one who is 'in harmony with the decrees of the Author of this world, one who has made his peace with God and His creatures.

Islam is based on two fundamental truths: (a) the Oneness of God and (b) the Brotherhood of Man, and is entirely free from any encumbrances of theological dogma. Above every thing else it is a positive faith.

The influence of the *Hajj* cannot be exaggerated. To be a member of that huge congregation gathered together from the four corners of the earth, on this sacred occasion and on the sacred sopt, and to join with this mass of humanity, in all humility, in the glorification of God, is to have one's consciousness impressed by full significance of the Islamic ideal, is to be privileged to participate in one of the most soul-inspiring experiences that have ever been granted to human beings. To visit the birthplace of Islam, to treat the sacred ground of the Prophet's struggle to call erring humanity back to God to re-live those hallowed by the memories of Muhammad's long toil and sufferings in glorious years of sacrifice and martyrdom, is to have one's soul kindled by that celestial fire which lighted up the whole earth. But this is not all. The *Hajj*, above everything else, makes for unity among Muslims. If there is anything that unifies the scattered forces of Islam and imbues them with mutual sympathy it is the pilgrimage. It provides them with a central point to which they rally from all corners of the earth. It creates for them annually an occasion to meet and know one another, to exchange views and compare experiences and unite their various efforts to the common good. Distances are annihilated. Differences of sect are set aside. Divergences of race and colour cease to exist in this fraternity of faith that unites all Muslims in one great brotherhood and makes them conscious of the glorious heritage that is theirs.

Mrs. CECILIA MAHMUDA CANNOLLY
(Australia)

Why I embraced Islam?

First and foremost I would say it was because fundamentally I had always been a Muslim without being aware of it.

Very early in my life I had lost faith in Christianity for many reasons, the major one being that whenever I questioned any Christian whether it was a person belonging to the so called Holy Orders or a layman, regarding any point that puzzled me in regard to the Church teachings, I invariably received the monotonous answer: 'You must not question the teachings of the Church; you must have faith.' I did not have the courage in those days to say 'I cannot have faith in something that I do not understand', and, from my experience, neither do most of the people who call themselves Christians. What did I do was to leave the Church (Roman Catholic) and its teaching and to place my faith in the one true God in Whom it was much easier to believe, than in the three gods of the Church. By contrast with the mysteries and miracles of the Christian teaching, life took on a new and wider meaning, no longer cramped with dogma and ritual. Everywhere I looked I could see God's work. And although, in common with greater minds than my own, I could not understand the miracles that happened before my eyes, I could stand and marvel at the wonder of it all – the trees, flowers, birds and animals. Even a new born baby became a beautiful miracles, not the same thing that the Church had taught me to believe at all. I remembered how, when a child, I gazed at new-born babies and thought, "It's all covered in black sin." I no longer believed in ugliness; everything became beautiful.

Then one day my daughter brought home a book about Islam. We became so interested in it that we followed

it up with many other books on Islam. We soon realized that this was really what we believed. During the time I had believed in Christianity I had been led to believe that Islam was only something to joke about. Thus all that I then read was a revelation to me. After a while I looked up some Muslims and questioned them on some of the points that were not quite clear to me. Here again there was yet another revelation. My questions were all answered promptly and consciseily, so different from the frustration I had experienced when questioning Christianity. After much reading and studying of the religion of Islam both my daughter and myself decided to become Muslims, taking names of Rashida and Mahmuda respectively.

If I were asked what impressed me most in the religion of Islam, I would probably say the prayers, because prayers in Christianity are used wholly in begging God (through Jesus Christ) to grant worldly favours, whereas in Islam they are used to give praise and thanks to Almighty God for all His blessings since He knows what is necessary for our welfare and grants us what we need without our asking for it.

KHADIJA F. R. FEZOUI
(England)

Not satisfied with the Church of England in which I had been brought up as it lacked vitality and definite authoritative teachings, I became a Roman Catholic at the age of 20. My conversion cost me many years of unhappiness because of the opposition of relatives and friends. It made me very unhappy to cause them so much sorrow, but I sincerely believe that the Roman Catholic Church alone had the One True Faith, and I must do God's will, no matter what the cost to myself or those I loved.

I found that the price of unity in the Roman Catholic Church was the giving up of private judgement. I had to believe in the infallibility of the Church, and in any teaching of the Church, no matter how contrary to reason. If my reason rebelled, as it often did, I had to tell myself that my reason was wrong and that the teachings of the Church were above reason. One example was the belief that every wafer consumed at Holy Communion is changed into Jesus Christ, both God and man although no change is apparent to the senses. I wondered how a man could be contained in a wafer, and how he could be in so many wafers at the same time, not only in that church, but in churches allover the world. There seemed to be something repugnant about the idea of consuming human flesh and blood. Nevertheless, I compelled myself to believe that the teachings of the Church must be true, and I worked myself up into a state of spiritual ecstasy, by means of prayers, so that I could adore the wafer without arguing with myself or feeling repugnance. Another problem was how the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross could be repeated over and over again without his dying again. There were a number of other problems. These doubts caused me great unhappiness. I felt that I was not a good Catholic.

I also found myself unable to wholeheartedly accept the worship of the Virgin Mary and the Saints. Catholics do not believe that the mother of Jesus is Divine, but they speak of her as the Queen of Heaven, Mediatrix of all Graces, etc., and regard her intercession as essential. I once heard a priest tell a class of school-children that a man who had been very wicked was saved from Hell by one thing he never forgot to pray to "Our Lady". I could not reconcile this with the Biblical version of Christianity Jesus as the Saviour of the world.

In spite of all these difficulties, I found many consolations in the Catholic Church, and was something very happy in it. For a period of about a year I felt very

decided, as a result of coming into contact with a number of Protestants whose ardour and sincerity matched that of the Catholics. They presented me with a clear-cut alternative to Catholicism, based on the Bible alone unlike the vagueness of a large part of the Church of England. They believed in Jesus Christ as Saviour. Although I admired their simplicity of faith, I could not agree that one is saved by faith alone, nor that one can never lose one's faith once he has accepted Christ as Saviours. After much self-questioning, I was thrown back on an even more implicit obedience to the Catholic Church to still my doubts.

I knew little about Islam. I was rather prejudicated by reason of certain newspaper articles about the slave trade in Arab countries, polygamy, traffic in drugs and cruelty to animals. I had a vague memory of schooldays history of the crusades, which gave the impression that the Muslims were barbaric and intolerant.

I remembered how my feeling of being torn between the doctrines of Catholicism and Protestantism had driven me to despair and a serious nervous breakdown. Would this new quest for truth lead me to an even worse condition? Nevertheless, I felt that I could not forget about the Qur'an and go on as if I had not read it. I prayed that God would guide me to the truth. In order to make a just judgement, I imagined that I was a person from a remote place, who had never heard of Christianity, and I put personal memories and prejudices out of my mind, as far as possible.

I considered the possible alternatives regarding the Qur'an. Either it was a Revelation from God or Muhammad had obtained his information about histories described in the Bible from human sources, and had pretended to be inspired by God, or he was inspired by the devil, either because he was wicked (may God forgive me) or because he was a well-meaning man who had been taken in by the devil.

I obtained some information about the life and character of Muhammad from other books and sources, both Muslim and non-Muslim. It seemed unlikely that he had obtained his detailed knowledge of Jewish and Christian history from human sources, since he could not read the Bible, and if he had talked to Jews and Christians, he would have found it difficult to remember so many details from a few conversations while, if he had had any intensive instructions from Jews and Christians, other people would have known about it, and would have exposed him as a fraud. In fact some people tried to make these allegations, but were unable to make out a case.

A study of his character convinced me that he was incapable of misrepresentation. He was devout, kind, just, forgiving, and avoided the sins which spring from selfishness and self-indulgence. An unscrupulous man, prepared to tell blasphemous lies for his own ends, would not have faced thirteen years of persecution and discouragement as Muhammad did. Nor would his followers have shared his sufferings for so many years if they had not believed in his sincerity. When success came to him, he did not become a proud, intolerant dictator, as a self-seeking man would have done. He continued to live simply and with humility, and he forgave the people of Mecca, who had caused so much trouble for him and his followers, when he could have wreaked vengeance on them. Only a man who sincerely sought to please God could have conducted himself so well in adversity and prosperity. Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." A hypocrite cannot avoid giving himself away at sometime. In Muhammad's life there was nothing to cause people to question his sincerity.

Again was it possible that the devil could sometimes take control of a normally good man, and delude him into thinking that his inspirations came from God? Was it likely that the devil would establish an apparently good

religion for the sole purpose of preventing people from being saved through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—a religion which abolished polytheism and idolatry, which established justice, enjoined worship of God and help for the poor and helpless, which improved the status of women, which increased knowledge of science, which enjoined universal brotherhood and tolerance of other religions, which advocated the freeing of slaves, which was stern towards theft, murder and adultery, which abolished the custom of the Pagan Arabs of burying baby girls alive, which restricted to four the number of wives a man could have, and admonished him to treat them justly?

As against this, there is no version of Christianity which is really satisfactory. Christians believe that because of the Fall of Adam and Eve, all human beings are born in a state of original sin, are unable by their own actions to merit Heaven. Muslims, however, do not believe that people are punished for the sins of Adam and Eve. They believe that all human beings are born of innocence, and can only lose their hope of Heaven by their own sins when they are old enough to be guilty of deliberate wrong-doing.

I was impressed by the words of the Qur'an: "No laden soul shall bear another's load." So the reward of Heaven or the punishment of Hell was to be the result of one's own faith (or lack of it) and actions—not someone else's sacrifice or intercession. This seemed more just and reasonable.

The course of research and reasoning which I followed took many months before I felt sufficiently sure to make a declaration of faith in Islam. I married a nominal Muslim but I became a Muslim in spite of my marriage, not because of it. I was converted as a result of reading the Holy Qur'an, and, to some extent, by the example of good Muslims.

I have come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a perfect religious organisation on earth, but when I consider Islam in the days of its glory, and as it now is shown forth in the lives of the best of the Muslims, I feel that it is a guide for me.

Islam could be a great influence for good in the world if Muslims realised that religious principles are not incompatible with material progress and if they built a worthy civilization on the foundations of their great past, instead of copying materialism and loose standards of morality from other nations. Moreover, if Britain and Europe were converted to Islam, they would again be powerful forces for good British and European Muslims are some of the best. Most people in Britain have lost their religion. They need to be given a new sense of purpose. I hope that Muslims from other countries who come into contact with them will give them a good impression and arouse their interest in Islam.

FATIMA HEEREN
(West Germany)

Why I Embraced Islam?

Shortly after I was born in 1934 it became a "fashion" in Germany to quit membership of the Church—Catholic or Protestant -and become "gottglaubig" which means believing in God but actually signifies rather the contrary. In fact when I was about seven years old an elder girl told me that there was no God at all and as she seemed to me quite an authentic person and I had just learned that also Santa Claus is only an invention for children, turned all my interest towards this world. Yet the world at that time was far from being easily understandable for young people. There were bombs day after day, there was father who could come only now and then for just one day and mother who knitted gloves and socks for "our poor soldiers," there was a big house in the neighbourhood which

was turned into a hospital for the wounded. When the war was over there were strange people who took away our house and American war-films started coming in which melted my heart. I was unable to judge who was right and who was wrong and everything looked cruel and senseless to me; there were a thousand whys to which nobody could give a satisfactory answer. I started to be on the outlook for God yet hard though I tried I could neither find Him in Catholicism nor Protestantism nor with Jehova's witnesses. The road nearer to God in these religions was barred for me through the fact that all of them had doctrines in which to believe I found impossible and injunctions to follow which strictly seemed to me impracticable. And how could I accept a faith in which I knew from the very outset that I would be tortured by self-accusation for my own imperfection?

It is still a miracle for me that of all girls I was the one to meet a young European who had already embraced Islam seven years before. The very first time we met I happened to enquire about his religion and when I learned that it was Islam I asked him to tell me more about it. I was a great sceptic at that time due to the disappointments I had had with other religions, yet when he explained to me the meaning of the word Muslim i.e. one who out of free will surrenders himself to God's Commandments, something started waking up within me. Then he went on to explain to me that all men, animals, plants and everything else in this universe is already Muslim compulsorily, because they would destroy themselves if they would not follow God's laws in matters such as eating, drinking, procreation and so on. Man alone, so he said, is in a position to accept Islam also spiritually, apart from the material one, whereas here he practically does not have a free choice but has to follow his inborn urges as animals and plants.

It was the wonderful logic, the pure commonsense of all Islamic teachings which attracted me so much, in

the first few fundamental doctrines about which I learned as much as in the books I read in the following years small though the stock of unbiased Islamic literature in German language is. Apart from the help of the young Muslim he now is my husband who never got tired of explaining things to me and answering all my questions. Muhammad Asad's book "The Road to Mecca" made me understand the deep meaning behind all Islamic Injunctions and thus helped me most while I was on my way to become a Muslima.

While already Muslima in my heart I decided that I would try out first whether I would be able to follow the laws of Islam and so I kept fast—the most difficult duty as it seemed to me then—in Ramadan 1959 And this taught me that if we do a thing for the love of God it is no longer as fastidious to cope with as it first seems.

After this it was only a matter of time till my husband and I had saved enough money for our emigration in a Muslim country as we saw that it is next to impossible to practise Islam in the West while one is not independent financially. My husband would have lost his job immediately had he asked for example for 15 minutes leave to offer his Zuhr Prayers or had we tried to observe *Purdah*, my husband in the office with his three lady secretaries and I in a society where only nuns completely cover their bodies.

After a series of unsuccessful attempts it was Pakistan where my husband was offered a suitable position and where we found our new home amongst brothers and sisters in faith.

I used to enjoy all freedom the West offers to women: free discussions with men as well as women, parties, cinemas, dancing, concerts, theatre, swimming, skiting, shopping holidays and driving my own car. Apart from this I have left behind my mother, father, sister and brothers to all of whom I feel strongly attached. Yet the peace of mind I have found since I am trying to be a good Muslima

not only of the tongue but also of the heart and in practice is an ample compensation for what I have given up. It is a peace which I never hoped to find while still a Westerner with unavoidably materialistic outlook on life.

The reason why I tell this is that I so much want to make especially my young sisters and brothers understand that all the tempting glitter of Materialism is just nothing when compared with the previous gift that God bestows on those whom He makes Muslims. May they be strong enough to reject the talma and choose the true jewel Islam

AYESHA BRIDGET HONEY*

(England)

FROM CHRISTIANITY TO ISLAM

(An interview with the learned Miss Ayesha Bridget Honey)

Question. When did you embrace Islam and what was your age at that time?

Answer: Three and a half years back Allah illuminated me with the light of Islam. At that time I was 21 years old.

Question: Please tell us how you came to embrace Islam?

Answer: The family in which I was born and grew up was, from the religious point of view, no different from the generality of British homes. My mother is a Christian but she doesn't practise religious worship and rituals. My father however did not believe in any religion. In my childhood I studied at a religious school and learned the subjects which are taught in English Church schools. Our usual conversation was never even remotely concerned with religion. I don't remember any day of my childhood when I heard the name of God in my home.

* Ayesha Bridget Honey is an English convert to Islam. Her interview was originally Published in the Journal, "Hadarat Al-Islam.

While studying at the Church school I was not satisfied with some of the basic beliefs of Christianity especially the concept of trinity and the belief in atonement that God or Jesus had ransomed the people and by accepting the cross had atoned for all their sins. I heard many discussions and arguments about these beliefs but whatever I heard seemed to me only one side of the reality while I wanted to know fully. My school was a Christian school **but I left it as an unbeliever.**

I was infatuated with philosophy and my desire to know the truth was intense. When at the age of 15, I read the book Taoteh Ching which is a collection of early writings about Chinese philosophy of Tao, I was influenced by its thought. Then when I found some introductory information about Buddhism I decided to go into the depths of both these philosophical beliefs. I decided to learn Chinese and to go to China myself but this was no easy task for a 15 years old girl with no money or means. So when I was 17 years old I went to Canada where, workin ,for 2 years, I collected enough money to continue my education. My programme was to get the secondary school degree so that I could get admission in a university to learn the Chinese language.

In Canada I came to know Hindu philosophy and read the holy books of Hindus The three beliefs, that is: Taoteh, Buddhism and Hinduism which I knew by now possessed beauty, profundity and exaltation but none of them could satisfy my mind or my feelings. In this vast universe and in daily life where people live together these faiths totally failed to reach any stability or balance. They completely neglect some one aspect The founder of the Tao philosophy wandered in remote corners of the world as a mystic and an ascetic. In search of truth Buddha left his wife and family. The books of the Hindu are basically ethical but are all human ideas of collective life in society only baseless hallucination?

This question bewildered me. I could not believe in any of these faiths. After all what could I believe in? What is the purpose of life? Is it only a chance, an accident as some people say? The tension and restlessness grew and I could not sleep nights.

In this way my success in the Secondary Examination and admission in London University to learn Chinese became meaningless for me. It is true that I fulfilled my desire to learn Chinese but the truth I had been searching for seemed still far away

After joining the university I got the chance to be introduced to Muslims. Before that I had neither read nor heard anything about Islam. In fact like other people in the West I also harboured prejudices and misunderstandings about it. But here in the university, Muslim students explained their basic beliefs to me calmly and in a very nice manner. They answered all my objections and gave me some books to read. In the beginning I just skipped over the pages of these books when I had nothing to do. I only considered them a source of amusement and derision. But when I actually read parts of these books, they slowly reduced my suspicions about Islam.

Then I started reading these books carefully. Their style of presentation and the freshness of explanation and commentary surprised me. I was extremely impressed by the logic and argument with which their concepts of the Creator and the created and life after death were put forward.

After that these Muslim students gave me an English translation of the Qur'an. However hard I try I cannot fully estimate the impression the Qur'an left on my heart. Before I finished the third *Surah* I had prostrated myself before the Creator of the universe. This was my first *Salat* (*namaz*) and since that time by the grace of Allah I am a Muslim. I accepted Islam hardly three months after I came to know about it. So I did not know anything more than basic concepts. After that started a lengthy

process of question which I asked my Muslim brothers and argued with them over the details and sections of these questions.

I am often asked about the main reasons which made me accept Islam. It is difficult for me to give satisfactory answer to this because the example of Islam (as a European Muslim has put it) is like that of a complete and perfect geometrical pattern whose every part completes its other parts and its real beauty lies in the harmony and cohesion of these parts and it is this characteristic of Islam which has a profound influence on human beings. Seen from a distance Islam's deep insight into the generality of things, motives, deeds, its explanations about the Muslim government will amaze you and if you look at its details you find it an incomparably guide for social life based as it is on straightforward and true ethical values. A Muslim takes the name of Allah whenever he does anything. And when he remembers Allah he examines his own self and in this he tries to reach a high standard. In this way the gulf between daily life of the world and the demands of religion is bridged and both sides become proportionate, evenly balanced and essential for each other. •

Question: After you accepted Islam what was the reaction of your family and your friends?

Answer: My parents did not pay much attention to my conversion to Islam. First they thought this was only a hobby horse of mine, somewhat liked my desire to learn Chinese. Soon the enthusiasm would subside and as time passed the incident would be forgotten. But when time passed and proved them to be wrong and my faith fructified to the extent that it was not limited to my thinking but extended itself to my habits and influenced and changed my way of life, then they started expressing their regrets. I caused them annoyance by abstaining from wine and pork. They disliked seeing me enveloped my head

covering ([illegible]) and everywhere keeping it on my head. Actually, I am convinced they were more concerned about what other people would say. They were not very concerned about faith and belief. However my English friends were different. They had the ability to argue and debate and they were ready to accept anything proved rationally. When I discussed Islamic thought and its principles of social life they admitted its wisdom.

I remember once there was an argument with some friends about polygamy and the limits Islam has imposed on it. I compared it with the principles put forward by western civilisation and they all agreed that polygamy limited by Islamic regulations is the best solution for married life.

Question: Did you face any difficulty or embarrassment after you accepted Islam?

Answer: People who have little ability to think are usually full of bigotry against Islam. They often make fun of Muslims. Even if they do not make fun of Muslims in front of them they deride them behind their backs. On the other hand they never tangle with the irreligious and the unbelievers. They in fact respect them for their so-called "free thought" but Islam and Muslims irritate them. In spite of this I did not meet with any difficulties worth mentioning. The reason for this was that I was a student of the University's Oriental and African Studies Institute and the people I met knew something of religions and beliefs. However I am aware of what many other Muslims have to endure.

Question: After accepting Islam to what extent did you acquire knowledge?

Answer: My study of Islam is limited to the books which reached me. I also learned a lot by questioning Muslim scholars. I also gained a lot by arguing with Muslims of various areas. Last year I learned about Islamic thought and western philosophy from a Sudanese student. This student held a meeting every week in which 10 persons

used to be present. Our method in this meeting was that we read important English translations of the Qur'an and compared with the original Arabic Qur'an to determine the nearest possible meaning of each verse. Then in light of various commentaries, especially Tabari's Tafsir we discussed the verse according to our own understanding I am sorry to say that after the departure of our Sudanese brother there is no one in London who has such knowledge or the enthusiasm to carry on the work with the same constancy.

Question: —Do you think Islam can influence modern civilisation in any way? Please tell us in which way?

Answer: Today the western world is living in darkness There is not even the slightest light of hope to show the way for the deliverance of the soul and the self Any person who is aware of the actual state of European societies can see this universal restlessness and worry which is hidden behind the false glare of progress and material excellence Now people are searching for a way out of their difficulties but they can see no way out Their search is fruitless There is only one choice before them and that is to go on advancing towards the hell of destruction and disaster. The beautiful harmony between the demands of the body and the needs of the soul which Islam presents has strong attraction for the West today. Islam can show modern civilisation the way which leads to the real success and salvation. It could give Western man understand of the real purpose of life and persuade him to struggle for the pleasure of Allah. This would also ensure his success hereafter. May Allah grant us success in this life and the next.

Question: In your opinion what is the method of propagating and spreading Islam?

Answer:—Before worrying about spreading Islam it is necessary that in our life and needs we should attain the standard which this faith demands of us.

It is thought that if we become missionaries of Islam then we need not worry about anything else. It is necessary for us to know Islam fully and only then to become

its missionaries so that we may be able to answer all questions and objections. No doubt the presence of certain books about Islam is useful in spreading its invitation. If we give a book to a non-Muslim he pays it more attention than he gives to debate or argument. But unfortunately, there are very few good books on Islam in English. I would again stress the importance of a living example. Hence it is essential for us that we make ourselves the exemplary human beings the Qur'an wants us to be.

Question: What are the special difficulties of British Muslims?

Answer. Where entire British families become Muslim they achieve the Islamic social life and live in peace. But when an unmarried boy or girl or a married man or woman singly accepts Islam they have to face difficulties. They have a constant feeling that British society and its general atmosphere is not their own. As they are not in an Islamic society they face hardships in saying their prayers and keeping fasts in time. The Islamic families are fulfilling their responsibilities in this respect. We also need teachers who should be examples of Islamic culture and should be able to help new Muslims in understanding the Qur'an. Many new Muslims want to understand the Qur'an properly but they have no means of doing this. I feel sorry while saying this that the Islamic cultural centre in London is not doing anything about this. This work depends only on students who do not have much time owing to their studies.

It is also necessary to mention the youths adoration of the West's false nuggets. They have been deceived by its blinding glare and are unaware of its artificiality. Here I would also like to express my liking for the strong family bonds and the clean social life. If we compare it with the West's social life it is comparatively at ethical heights. If there were Islamic social life in the real sense how excellent it would be!

O Allah make us true Muslims according to the demands of Islam

SECTION IV
REFORMERS, PREACHERS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

MUHAMMAD JOHN WEBSTER
(England)
(President, The English Muslim Mission)

Born in London I was brought up as a Christian of the Protestant persuasion. In 1930, in my teens, I was confronted with the problems normal to a reasonable intelligent young man, these problems being basically related to the reconciling of everyday affair with the claims of religion and here I came across the first weakness of Christianity. Christianity is a dualism which regards the world as sinful and seeks to turn its back on the realities of life, projecting its hopes into a future world. As a result of this there is created a Sunday attitude towards religion which has no place in the rest of the secular week. At this time in England there was a great deal of poverty and social discontent which Christianity made no attempt to resolve. More emotional than knowledgeable, with the enthusiasm of youth I rejected the Church and became a Communist.

Communism has a certain satisfaction at an emotional adolescent level but again I did not take long to realise the hateful nature of Communism based upon class warfare, in itself immortal. Having rejected the materialism of Communism I turned to the study of philosophy and religion. The unity which I observed all around me led me to identify myself with what is known as Pantheism, a natural law religion.

We in the West find it difficult to acquaint ourselves with Islam, for since the days of the Christian Crusades there has been either a conspiracy of silence or a deliberate perversion of Islamic matters. Anyway, at the time living in Australia I asked for a copy of the Holy Qur'an at the Sydney Public Library, when I was given the

Book and was reading the preface by the translator, the bigotry against Islam was so obvious that I closed it up. There was no Qur'an translated by a Muslim available. Some weeks later in Perth, Western Australia, I again asked at the library for a copy of the Qur'an stipulating that the translator must be a Muslim. It is difficult to put into words my immediate response to the first Surah, the Seven Opening Verses. Then I read something of the life of the Prophet (peace be on him). I spent hours in the library that day. I had found what I wanted, by the mercy of Allah, I was a Muslim. I had not at this time met any Muslim. I came out of the library that day exhausted by the tremendous intellectual and emotional experience I had received. The next experience, I still ask myself was it true or was it something I had dreamt up, for in cold print it seems impossible to have happened. I came out of the library intending to get myself a cup of coffee. I walked down the street and raising my eyes to a building in front of a brick wall, I saw the words, "Muslim Mosque". I straightaway said to myself "You know the truth, now accept it."

'La ilaha illallah Muhammad ur Rasul Allah' and so by the mercy of Allah I became a Muslim.

ABDULLAH BATTERSBY

(England)

(Major of the British Army)

Many years ago, a quarter of a century at least, it was part of my daily experience to travel along the waterways of Burma by sampan. My sampan-wallah was a Muslim — Sheikh Ali from Chittagong (East Pakistan), a splendid sailor and keenly observant of the rules of his faith. The consistency with which he maintained the hours of prayer and the obvious sincerity of his pious practice not only gained my respect but stimulated my interest in a faith that could hold such a man in pious thrall. Around up were

Burmese Buddhists. But there seemed to be something lacking in their religious practice. I knew they attended the pagodas, because I saw the old folk squatted there, uttering the formula of their creed. *Buddha carana gacchami Dhamma carana gacchami Sangha carana gacchami*, thus proclaiming that they accepted the joint guidance of the Buddha, the law, and the order, for the conduct of their spiritual lives. It was too placid, it lacked vigour, and was totally unlike the practice of Sheikh Ali, the sampan-wallah. I talked to him as we sailed along the narrow creeks and streams. He was not so good at telling others of the things that inspired him with pious zeal, as he was splendid example of the inspirational power of Islam.

I bought some books about the history and teachings of Islam. I learned of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and of his great achievements. I sometimes discussed them with some of my Muslim friends. Then the First World War broke out and, like a good many others, I found myself serving with the Indian Army in Mesopotamia. I was away from the Buddhist lands and among the Arabs, the people from whom the Prophet sprang, and in whose language the Holy Qur'an was recorded. The fact that I was among these people encouraged my further interest in understanding Islam. I studied Arabic and made close contact with the people, admiring the consistency of their worship of God, till I found myself also acknowledging that God was, indeed, a unity whereas from my childhood I had been reared to accept God was a Trinity. It had now become patent to me that God was not a Trinity but a Unity: *La ilaha illa'l-Lah* - and I was inclined to declare myself a Muslim. In fact, although I ceased entirely attending churches, and only visited Mosques when it was my official duty as a police officer to do so, it was only when in Palestine between the year 1935 and 1942 that I took courage of conviction and made an official declaration of my change of faith to Islam that had been my choice for so many years.

THOMAS IRVING

(Canada)

(Professor and Islamic Scholar)

In approaching an account of my conversion to Islam, it would be as well to relate my personal experiences, both before and after coming into contact with its ideals. This is not so much to tell a story in itself as to show how the thought of thousands of other young Canadians and Americans is evolving and the opportunity that awaits an effective Islamic propaganda.

I can remember thrilling as a very small child to the Christian interpretation of Jesus's life, but yet I cannot say that I was ever truly Christian of my own conviction. Instead of absorbing the pretty Biblical tales, I began wondering why so many in the world were "heathen", why Jews and Christians differed on the same Bible, why the unbelievers were damned when the fault was not theirs, and also why they could practice goodness as well as the so-called "higher" nations.

I remember especially a missionary returned from India stating how "Mohammedans" were so elaborate in adhering to their religion; that was my first encounter with Islam, and it roused an unconscious admiration in me for their faith and a desire to know more about these "wicked" people.

In my first year course in Oriental literature, I had learned of the progression of human thought in its attempt to perfect its conception of God. Jesus had culminated the teaching of a loving God. This idea had been lost in a cloud of liturgical doggerel and atavistic paganism: a beneficent, merciful deity had been obscured by an implacable over lord who could only be reached through an intercessor. Someone was needed to lead men back to the fountain of truth with its limpid main-stream of the One God.

Europe was still in the semi-barbarism induced by the folk-wanderings and the extinction of classic culture by a narrow ecclesiasticism. The East was the logical centre of inspiration, and here Muhammad (God's blessing be on him) arose seven centuries after Jesus, when Christian paganism was firmly entrenched in Europe and rational study, let alone inspiration, still nine centuries distant.

At last I was able to accept Muhammad as an apostle of God: firstly, he was needed; secondly, my own conclusions had been independent and still coincided; and thirdly, apart from both the former, the realization of the divine quality of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's teaching flooded upon me clearly.

At the same time, I received and bought more and more literature upon Islam. An Indian philanthropist of Bombay, the late Mr. Q. A. Jairazbhoy, had sent me **What is Islam** by H. W. Lovegrove (this is perhaps the most practical exposition that I have read, and merits wide distribution). Later, he sent Maulvi Muhammad Ali's excellent annotated edition of the Holy Qur'an, and various other books and tracts. At Montreal, I was able to procure considerable French literature on Islam both for and against, and this helped broaden my vision.

FAUZUDDIN AHMAD OVERING

(Holland)

(Preacher and Social Worker)

It is difficult to say how my first interest in the Eastern world was aroused. It was purely linguistic at first. I started learning Arabic when still at the primary school when I was about twelve or thirteen, some thirty years ago. But as I had no one to help me, I did not make much headway at first.

oneself. the world and the God, that is, it consists in submission to the will of God. Though the beauty and majestic terseness of the Qur'an is lost in translation. I will quote God's own words:

> "O soul that art at rest. Return to thy Lord, well-pleased with Him, well-pleasing Him. So enter among my servants. Enter my Garden—the paradise Al-Qur'an LXXXIX:27-30

Islam, therefore, is the only pure religion not a religion marred by mythology, like Christianity and other religions.

Compare the Christian doctrine that an infant is responsible for the sins of its far forbears, with God's consoling words:

> "And no soul earns evil, but against itself, and no bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another. Al-Qur'an VI:165

> "We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability. Al-Qur'an VII:42

UMAR MITA

(Japan)

(Economist, Social Worker and Preacher)

By the grace of Allah I am leading a happy Muslim life for the last 3 years. The righteous way of life as taught by Islam, was shown to me by our Pakistani Tablighi brethren (Missionaries), who visited my country and to whom I am deeply grateful.

The majority of our people are Buddhists, but they are Buddhists in name only. They are not practising Buddhism and actually they are almost unmindful of their religious knowledge. The main reason for this apathetic attitude may be due to the fact that Buddhism presents a high sounding and complicated philosophy and gives nothing practical. It is thus beyond the reach of an average person who remains busy with the problems of this worldly life. He cannot understand it nor can he implement it

Islam means "peace" and no other people than the Japanese require peace more. Real peace can come to us by accepting the religion of peace. Peace with all men and peace with God. The brotherhood of Islam is a unique principle and in it truly lies salvation for mankind.

ALI MUHAMMAD MORI

(Japan)

(Social Worker and Preacher)

About 18 years ago I was in Manchuria where Japan was still weilding power. It was in a desert near Peking that I first came across a group of Muslims. They were leading a pious life and I was deeply impressed by their way of living and by their attitude on life. This impression became deeper and deeper as I travelled into the interior of Manchuria.

I returned to Japan a defeated country – in the summer of 1946 and I found that the situation in Japan had changed altogether. There was tremendous change in the realm of thinking of the people. Buddhism which was the faith of the majority of Japanese, was thoroughly corrupted and instead of providing salvation it was exerting an evil influence upon society.

Christianity, after the war had made rapid strides in Japan although it existed there for the last 90 years, but it had remained as a formal religion only. At first Christianity seemed to be accepted by the innocent pure and simple young people who in a way had "killed" their love for Buddhism but to their great disappointment they soon found out that behind the cover of Christianity there existed the network of British and American capitalist interest. Christianity which has been given up in Christian countries is now being used for export, to serve their capitalistic interest.

Islamic brotherhood recognises no national, tribal or ethnological barriers. It unites all Muslims in the world as brothers. And, moreover, Islam is not for only a chosen few. It is the religion of the common man. It is for all men whether they are Pakistanis or Indians, Arabs or Afghans, Chinese or Japanese; in short, it is an international religion.

Islam thrives in the humdrum of life. It is the only Religion of Allah which has survived the onslaughts of time. Islamic teachings are here intact as they were revealed to the Prophet fourteen hundred years ago. And, as Islam is the natural religion, it has got the necessary flexibility for adjustment of the needs of different people in different ages. Thus during its comparatively shorter history, it has played a magnificent role in the development of human civilization.

In Islam the road to salvation goes through society; it does not by-pass our corporate living. I know something about Buddhism and also Christianity. Both teach us renunciation of worldly ties and put premium on escape from human society. Some Buddhist sects build temples on the slopes of mountains, where men can reach only with great difficulty. Thus there are many examples in Japanese religious life where God is made to live not within the reach of the common man. And Christians also have their monasteries in far away lonely places. They all separate religious life from the ordinary human life. But, on the other hand, our Islam provides Masjid in the heart of the village or town or in business centres of the city. It enjoins prayer with Jama'at and service of society as a form of religion.

Human living is a combination of spirit and matter. Allah has given us soul and body. Therefore, for a full human living we must knit our body and soul together, and should not draw a line between the material and the spiritual. Islam accepts both the spirit and the matter, and by

putting them in their right places, it builds its philosophy to cover all the aspects of human living.

I am a new Muslim. I embraced Islam two years ago. And as I have understood it, Islam is a brotherhood with faith and practice.

Today, Japan is the most advanced industrial country in Asia. Our Japanese society has totally changed due to the modern technological revolution and its by-product, i.e., the material way of life. With the utter lack of natural resources in Japan, our only asset is hard work. We have to work hard every day and night just to maintain ourselves and keep up our trade and industry. We are busy in a materialistic world there is no sign of any spiritual life. We struggle only for our worldly gain. Japanese people have no time to think over transcendental problems. They have no religion and no spiritual concepts whatsoever and they are just following in the footsteps of materialistic Europe. That is why spiritually they are becoming poorer and poorer and their well-fed and well-clad bodies contain wretched and unhappy souls.

I am confident that the present moment is most opportune for spreading Islam in Japan. Blind pursuit of material pleasures have now made the so-called progressive nations the victims of spiritual hollowness. Islam and Islam alone can fill this vacuum in their souls. If proper steps are now taken for the preaching of Islam in Japan, I feel that within two or three generations the entire country can be brought within the fold of Islam. By this conversion, I foresee, a great glory for Islam in the Far East and also greater blessing for humanity in that part of the world.

S. A. BOARD
(U. S. A.)

It was sometime during 1920, while in a doctor's office I saw an issue of the *African Times* and *Orient Review*, London. It contained an article on Islam. In this article there was an expression which caught my eye, and I shall never forget it as it has become a part of me. The expression read, *La ilaha illa'llah'*

> There is but one God. This was a priceless possession which Muslims carry in their breasts.

Soon after I became a Muslim and received the name of Salah-ud-din. I believe Islam is the right faith, for it joins no partners with God and teaches us that no one else can answer for our sins. Also, it harmonizes with nature, which shows us there can't be two bosses on a job whether in the barnyard, pasture, city, state, nation or the universe. Another fact that convinced me of the truth of the message of Islam was that it aroused the Arabs, and out of the mystic deserts surged the sturdy followers of Islam, who welded the world into a new empire and sang songs of love and victory in the values of Andalusia.

The Muslim Moors found Spain a jungle, and turned it into a 'Garden of Roses'. I thank God for a man like John W. Draper, who in his '*The Intellectual Development of Europe*' gives the world the truth about the great part Islam played in originating modern civilization. He, as a matter of fact deplores the way Christian historians try to put out of sights Europe's debt to Islam.

Here is his description of the natives of Europe as the Moors found them:

> "From the barbarism of the native people of Europe, who could scarcely be said to have emerged from the savage state, unclean in person, benighted in mind, inhabiting huts in which it was a mark of wealth if there were bulrushes on the floor and straw mats against the wall, miserably fed on beans, vetches, roots and even the bark of trees, clad in garments

and all the other trappings of Romanism. It did not try to concern itself with what went on outside the Church.

It was on account of this that I turned to these two panaceas of the present day: Communism and Fascism.

As a Communist I tried to think of the joys of classless society, etc., but the constant stories of those who had 'escaped' (how can one escape from a free land?) from the 'new democracies' made me see that Communism was just the tool of would-be world rulers, the Russians. I then swung to the other extreme Fascism. This doctrine promised every thing to everybody and I tried to make myself hate people for their race or colour. It was only after some months as one of Mosley's supporters that I thought of the last war and all the beating, etc., done by the Nazis and I tried to push them out of my mind. I was never happy as Fascist but it seemed to me the only solution to our difficulties.

It was whilst in this frame of mind that I saw a copy of '*The Islamic Review*' on a bookstall. I don't know what made me pay two shillings and six pence for a magazine which expressed doctrines that I had been told by Christians, Communists and Fascists were only believed by cut-throat sand bandits and were not worth tuppence. I did buy it, however, and I read and re-read it. In Islam I found all that was good in Christianity, Communism and all the other "isms" with a bit more as well.

I instantly took out a year's subscription and a few months later I became a Muslim. Since that day I have been very happy in my new faith.

I hope to learn Arabic if and when I get to the university. At the present moment however, I am studying Latin, French and Spanish.

THOMAS MUHAMMAD CLAYTON
(U. S. A.)

The sun had just passed the meridian. As we walked along the hot, dusty road, we heard or arther felt a monotonous but strangely beautiful chant fill the air about us. Passing through a group of trees, a strange and wondrous sight befell our unbelieving eyes. There, on a recently improvised high wooden tower, a blind Arab, clad in spotless raiment and white turban, seemed to harangue the very heavens with his fascinating intonation. We sat down with no conscious effort hypnotized by his weird, spiritlike refrain. The words we did not understand fell fascinatingly upon our ears. *Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, La Ilaha Illal-Lah*. God is the Greatest, God is the Greatest, there is no god but God.

Before that we had been aware of nothing going on about us, but now we noticed that a great number of people were beginning to assemble. People of all ages, of all manners of dress, of all walks of life, were approaching with a taciturnity which betokened reverence. They spread long mats upon the ground which produced an interesting colour contrast between the green of the grass and the tan of the mats. More people cmae, and indeed, we had begun to wonder whether the assembly would ever be complete. The people took off their shoes and sandals and formed long lines, one line falling in behind the other. We were amazed, even in our silent passive observation, that no distinctions of any kind were to be found in this congregation. Here were white men, yellow men, black men, poor men, wealthy men, beggars and merchants, all standing side by side with no thought of race or social status in life. Not one single person in that whole gathering looked away from the mat immediately in front of him.

The fraternal spirit displayed by that heterogeneous group is an impression which was indelible. Almost three years have now passed since that event, two of which I have been a Muslim and I find myself even now awakening in the middle of the night to hear once more that beautiful and plaintive chant, and to see again those men who displayed the true attribute of men who sincerely seek their God.

J. W. LOVEGOVE

(England)

These few lines are a humble attempt on my part to meet inquiries which I receive from various quarters as to the reasons for my embracing Islam. I have not to make a case for the Faith. There is something unique about it. It is the religion of history and its teacher a personality in history. We know very little of other religions as to their original teachings; some scattered accounts consisting of a few moral precepts have been handed down to us; their genuineness being admittedly impeachable. The lives of almost all other teachers are enveloped in myths and mystery, and do not help us to read their own teachings in the light of their actions. On the other hand, in the case of Islam, no one has ever doubted the authenticity of its record. The Book of Islam, the Qur'an, is the same today as it was in the days of the Holy Prophet. His deeds and his sayings in which he translates the various precepts of the Book, have come to us in their original purity. I found in them a consolation, which in vain I had searched for elsewhere. I wanted a simple, practical religion, free from dogma and tenets, which I could not accept without killing my reason. To do my duty to God, and my neighbour, undoubtedly is and ought to be the main object of every religious system, but Islam came

to give the maxim a practical shape. We want precept as well as example to meet all the contingencies and exigencies of life and directions to guide us in our difficult callings. This I found in Islam.

T. H. MACBARKLIE

(Ireland)

I was brought up in the Protestant faith, and at a very early age I began to find the teachings of Christianity unsatisfactory. By the time I had left school and gone to the university this suspicion had become a certainty. The Christian Church, as I had been shown it, meant little or nothing to me. I almost despaired of finding an established creed which would include all ideas I had formulated and for a long time I tried to satisfy myself with vague beliefs of my own. One day I chanced on a copy of the book '*Islam and Civilization*'. As I read it I realized that all my beliefs were included in the doctrine the little volume expounded.

The broad outlook of Islam as opposed to the narrowness of the Christian sects, the learning and culture of the Islamic countries in the Middle Ages compared with the ignorance and superstition of other lands at that time, the logical theory of compensation as against the Christian idea of atonement, were a few of the points that first struck me. Later I came to realize that here was a faith based on humanity itself, ready for the guidance of rich and poor alike and able to break down all barriers of creed and colour

DENIS WARRINGTON-FRY

(Australia)

Islam came to me as the spring comes to the cold earth after dark winter. It has warmed my soul and clothed me in beautiful teachings. How clear and fresh are the teachings of Islam and how logical! "There is but One God and Muhammad is His Prophet." Can there be anything more sublime than this? None of the mysterious "The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost" ritual, which I suppose, is quite awe-inspiring but is hardly satisfactory to a keen mind. Islam is so modern, so applicable to the world today. Take, for instance, the teachings of the Equality of Man which is taught also in the Christian Churches but which has no meaning with their Pope and Archbishops and Bishops, and so on, all striving for power and using God's name as an excuse. How different is Islam from this! How much more sincere are the teachings of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as revealed to him by God!

FAROUK B. KARAI

(Zanzibar)

The reason of my becoming a Muslim was an inward feeling and my great love and devotion to the Holy Prophet of Islam—Muhammad (May peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). I had cherished these feelings in my heart since long quite spontaneously. Furthermore I was living in Zanzibar where many Muslim friends gave me an opportunity to study and understand Islam thoroughly. I used to read Islamic literature secretly for fear of my relatives. However, in December 1940, I found myself ready to face the world and I announced my acceptance of Islam and then began the story of my 'persecution' at the hands of my family members and others of the Parsee community to which I had formerly belonged. It is a long story of hardships that I have undergone. My family strongly disapproved of my becoming a Muslim and they

employed all conceivable methods to harass me. Since 'Truth' had dawned upon me, nothing could deter me from following my chosen path of accepting One God and Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) as His last Messenger.

I stood like the rock of Gibraltar against the innumerable miseries, misfortunes and calamities brought upon me by my family members, one after the other. However the thought that "Allah knows His ways best" sustained me through all this.

The Holy Qur'an which I studied in Gujrati, helped me a lot and I can say without any fear of contradiction that no other religious book can stand equal to it. This is the only "Book" which is complete in itself teaching simplicity, love, brotherhood, equality and humanity. It is a wonderful Book indeed and guided by its sublime precepts, the Muslims will live for ever.

MUMIN ABDUR RAZZAQUE SELLIAH

(Ceylon)

At one time I really held Islam in abhorrence. I had no Muslim friends, for Islam was so repulsive to me that I did not want even to associate with its adherents. Little did I dream that a study of books on Islam would make a new man of me. I began to love Islam because of its straight and non-mysterious path. It is clean and simple, yet so full of deep studies that I soon felt the inevitable was drawing near.

The Holy Qur'an, some passages of which I read, simply struck me with wonder, for I had the idea that there was nothing to rival the Bible. I found, however, that I was hopelessly mistaken in this. Indeed, the Holy Qur'an is so full of truths, and its teachings so practical and free from dogmatic tenets and mysteries, that I daily drifted into the religion of 'Peace and Love' which Islam certainly is.

The Muslim brotherhood also did not pass me unnoticed. If one wants to see the true realization of "love thy neighbour as ye love thyself" it can only be found in the Muslim brotherhood, the greatest and truest union of people the world has ever seen.

What convinced me further was that Islam was not dogmatic. It is ideal and practical, rational and modern. It is also ideal in its conception of the One God and in its spirituality. Practical, in its tenets, modern and rational in outlook, it is the one religion for all humanity.

ABDULLAH UEMURA

(Japan)

Islam lays great emphasis on the Oneness of God, on Life-after-death, on the Day of Judgment, on Love, on Righteousness, on Virtue, on Truthfulness, on Integrity of character and all that is good in life. Seek the pleasure of Allah – that in truth is the essence of the teachings of Islam. And in my search for truth, I found it in Islam.

Christianity or for that matter the Gospels, as they exist today, are not the same pure revelation as had come from God. Time and again changes have been made therein and its originality is thus distorted. Whereas the Holy Qur'an is a revelation from God and it has remained the same. Without the slightest change, or alteration.

Christianity as it has been brought down to us is not in a true sense, revelation from God but only words and conduct of Jesus Christ concerning it, corresponding to the *Hadith* of Islam. Therefore God's revelation is not direct as is in Islam.

The most confusing point about Christianity is the issue of 'Trinity.' Is it to be merely believed without being understood, for there is no rational explanation to it? Moreover, it is shocking to hear that the punishment of sinners and, therefore, non-Christians too (as sinner for non-belief in Christian preachings) is eternal death

If sinners were told that they would die for ever, their natural reaction would be to indulge in luxury and vice more deeply to satisfy themselves because when death comes, it would mean an end for ever.

The Japanese Mahayana Buddhism is a product of the orthodox and primitive Buddhism. It resembles Brahmanism. It appears from its preachings that Buddha was an atheist, for he denies the immortality of the soul. However Brahmanism is distinct on this point. But unfortunately Brahmans are not clear about Brahma. They try to philosophise him and in their search to find him through their sense of sight and hearing, they begin to worship God's creation rather than God Himself. Islam alone guides us to the Living God, Who is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Who is neither begotten nor begetteth anyone and all that is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Him. To none should one bow except to Him. None should fear and submit but to Him.

The Japanese Shintoism is deprived for virtues, as it is not strictly moralistic. It is polytheistic and like the pagans allows worship of many gods.

Islam alone is the answer to the cry and search of the soul to find the path of Rationality and Truth.

IBRAHIM VOO

(Malaya)

I was a Roman Catholic before accepting Islam, but I lost faith in those rites such as the Trinity, Holy Communion, consecration of the ghost, mysteries, etc. I did not lose faith in God. No Catholic priest could help me by explaining these problems rationally, and the only reply was "Mysteries will remain mysteries; Jesus is the last prophet and Muhammad is an imposter" (God forbid).

My faith dwindled in that religion until I happened to mix with lots of Muslims in Malaya. I used to talk about religion with them and we sometimes had heated arguments.

Gradually I became convinced that Islam is rational and that Islam is what I know as truth. There is nothing to adore but God. No images, statues or paintings are found in a Mosque. It is prayer in a Mosque or anywhere that has won me over.

MAHMUD GUNNAR ERIKSON

(Sweden)

I praise God and pray for His noble Prophet. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, He has no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.

It was about five years ago when I first came in contact with Islam. A very good friend of mine wanted to read the Holy Qur'an for some reason. I did not want to be ignorant of that Book if he knew something about it, and so I also tried to get hold of Swedish translation. I managed to find one before he did, and started to read it. As I had borrowed it from a library, I could not have it for more than a fortnight, but I borrowed it again and again. The more I read of it, the more I became convinced that this was the Truth. So one day in November 1950, I made up my mind to become a Muslim.

One or two years passed by. I maintained that I was a 'Mohammedan', but it was nothing more. I did not enquire further into Islam till one day I visited the main library in Stockholm. Remembering that I was a 'Mohammedan', I made up my mind to see if the library had got some literature on the 'Mohammedan' religion, and to my astonishment, found some books. I borrowed a few of them and read them carefully, together with Muhammad Ali's translation of the Holy Qur'an. Now I became more convinced that ever of the truth of Islam, and I also began to practise it.

Just by chance, I happened to come in touch with a Muslim association in Sweden, and I attended 'Id-prayer in Stockholm for the first time in 1952.

This was my position when I went to England just a few weeks before 'Id-ul-Fitr 1372 A.H. The first day I was in England I went to Woking Mosque where it was

suggested that I should publicly declare my faith in Islam on 'Id-day, which I consequently did.

What especially appealed to me in Islam was and is, its rationalism. You are not asked to believe anything without reason. The Holy Qur'an gives us proofs of the existence of God that leave nothing further to be wished for.

Another appeal of Islam is its universality. The Qur'an does not talk about God as the Lord of the Arabs or of any special people, nay, not even as the Lord of the World, but as the Lord of the Worlds, while earlier revealed books talk about "the Lord God of Israel", etc.

Furthermore, we are asked to believe in all the Prophets, whether mentioned in the Holy Qur'an or not.

Finally, in previous revelations we find several prophecies which without the shadow of a doubt prophesy about the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace and the blessings of God), and in the Qur'an God says:"Surely, this day We have completed Our favour on you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion", and "Surely, the religion with God is Islam."

MUHAMMAD AL-MEHDI

(Australia)

One of the biggest obstacles to the acceptance of Islam by the West is the plethora of prejudiced books by Western critics who either damn Islam by faint praise or as is more usual, are totally unable to see beyond the dogma, much of which has crept in over the past few hundred years.

And always there is the apparently irresistible tendency to compare the worst of Islam with the best of Christianity. Never is it even hinted that the peak of the Islamic civilization coincided with the peak of the religious fervour and that the peak of European civilization coincided with the trough of Christian belief and practice.

Al-Hamd Lillah there are those of us fortunate enough to have been able to see beyond the image projec-

ted by such writers. There are innumerable others who having found Christianity unacceptable, yet as rational beings are Muslim at heart but reject Islam because they never see it in its beautiful simplicity.

Many people become Muslims because they actively seek a 'Way of Life'. My case was rather different in that I arrived at Islam without ever seeking it. I spent my school years in England in a 'Christian' society. England of course is only nominally Christian; it is a thing kept apart from 'real' life, something occasionally observed and partly understood. There are of course true men who are Christians. They do much good in the world. It is foolish to pretend that all that is Christian is inherently bad. Subsequently I travelled extensively throughout Africa and Europe. I visited every country on the African Continent and was deeply impressed by the obvious sincerity and charm of those people living in a predominantly Muslim society.

One of my deepest impressions was of the magnificent Mosque in Kano in Northern Nigeria and of the wonderful friends I made there.

I subsequently returned to live in a totally Muslim society in Cyrenaica. And thus whilst developing a deep sympathy for Islam I did not become Muslim until I had made a deep study of comparative religion. I think that any intelligent person studying comparative religion must eventually accept the basic truths of all the world's faiths and from there it is but a short and utterly logical step to Islam.

Some may doubt the above comment—but even today such men as the Bishop of Southwark in England, Dr. Tillich of the U.S.A. are seeing through and beyond all the dogma to the truth of the One Transcendent God. It may well be that the West will arrive at Islam via Christianity. This arrival may not be as we know Islam—but did not the Prophet (peace be on him) say "Ye are in an age when, if ye abandon one tenth of that which is ordered, ye will be ruined: after that there will be a time when he who shall observe one tenth of what is now ordered shall be saved."

Here in Australia there is a wonderful opportunity for *Tabligh ul-Islam*. Mohammad John Webster is doing a very fine job, already with some significant results. My own contacts and efforts are confined to a smaller group of University people. Here it is significant that the growth of Islam in the West does seem to be at the intellectual level.

Christianity gets many converts through Evangelical [illegible] but this is a transient effect and frequently the convert is left a disillusioned agnostic at a later date. Or as I have seen in Africa the Christian missionaries take away the original tribal beliefs and try to replace them with something utterly beyond the African's comprehension and once again the result is disastrous.

Islam appeals to the intellect. Few converts are convinced overnight. This is good. Reason is the [illegible] part and when once convinced of the absolute truth of the Prophet's message (peace be on him) further thought and questioning can only deepen the conviction.

MUSSA F. K. RWECHUNGUAR

(Tanganyika)

In 1945 I got baptized in the Roman Catholic Church and I was named Eustace. By then my parents were pagans but they were interested in Roman Catholic Church for it was too common in our area. In that case I cannot account for my being a Roman Catholic.

In 1949 when I was 11 years old I joined the Roman Catholic Primary School where I was taught the usual subjects as well as Religion. I remained in the Roman Catholic School till 1959 where I was kept a prisoner as far as the religious matters are concerned. I say so because I never got the chance to study other Religions apart from the Roman Catholic Church.

But in 1959, during the History period, I got the opportunity to read historical books about Religions. In this section I read about Christianity and Islam. These topics [illegible] me and made me try and dig out details about Islam. Alas! I never got clear notes! Then I went on with the study of Christianity in which I found the work of Luther and King Henry the VIII of England.

As I read on, the following questions came into my mind:

(1) Is Jesus Christ God?

(2) Is there a Trinity? How and what are the proofs?

(3) Is there Hell? Is it a place of rest and hope or a place of punishment?

(4) Has the Pope the power that he claims to have? How?

(5) Why should the priests hear confessions while Christ did not?

(6) Why is the Bible not at the disposal of the people?

(7) Are images permitted according to the Bible? If not why are they used in churches? in Roman Catholic churches?

(8) Why should Mary be called the mother of God while Christ never called her so?

(9) How is the bread changed into Christ's body as the church claims? (they are usually given to the people during the Mass)

(10) Why is Peter claimed to be the foundation of the Church?

And many other points of the same kind filled my mind.

As my knowledge was too limited, I went to the priest to seek the answers. He tried to answer them but he never satisfied me. Hence I went on asking. Finally I was told to forget all about these and simply believe, "for some are mysteries." then I got discouraged and dropped the matter altogether. So I went on following that first religion till I left school. But, frankly speaking, before I read historical books, I was regarding the Muslims as pagans and the Protestants as lost sheep.

It was early in 1963 that I gained the friendship of one Muslim. He told me many things about Islam. He tried his level best to have every point explained to me and gain my brotherhood in Religion but he could not. Although he failed, he had created in me a very strong idea about Islam. This happened while I was living along the coast of Lake Tanganyika. I then left for up country. In the new place I came across the Watch Tower people who answered my above questions.

As they found that I was asking wise questions, they gave me the book called "Let God be true" in which

many things are well proved according to the Bible. Furthermore, I gained the friendship of another Muslim. This one was too proud about his religion, I asked why and he said, "I am following the true Religion. Our doctrine is simple, without complications and we pray as the Prophet Muhammad, (peace be on him) used to do. I went on with both the Muslim friends and the Watch Tower people. To add to what I had, I got confused. With unsettled mind, I told my friend that I must drop Religion and stay more peacefully. On hearing this he asked why. I said, "I am fed up with these complications which are found in every Religion." This statement encouraged him to tell me more about Islam. These attracted me and made me admire Islam. I stayed with that friend of mine for three months, then we parted.

After leaving him, I thought over all we had discussed. In January 1964, I came across another well learned Muslim who told me more. This person made me admire Islam more. It was then that I stopped going to the church. I stayed in that state for about a month. During this period, I thought over and over and found that there is much truth in the Muslim Doctrine.

On 23rd February 1964, I declared that I was to join Islam for I had failed to follow the contradicted doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. Their principles are not according to the Bible which is the book they are supposed to follow.

Above all I had got the difficulty in loving and worshipping a complicated freakish-looking three-headed God. Moreover I had found Islam the best Religion I had ever heard of. Muslims follow the four books that God sent on earth. You pray as the Prophets used to. No changes are made now and then either in doctrine in the principles. ABOVE ALL YOU ADORE GOD without making anything equal to Him. You accept all the Prophets that God sent on earth. No images are found in the holy Mosque.

So on that day, I became a Muslim before a group of people being named Musa, a follower of Muhammad, (peace be on him), and a soldier of Islam.

Islam consists of God's Guidance to humanity. It is not the religion of any particular people. It does not belong to any specific land. All Prophets of God, in all ages and at all places, preached this very religion. The last, latest and final edition of this religion was revealed to Prophet Muhammad of Arabia (peace be upon him). He performed his mission in the best possible manner and established a civilization on the foundations of Islam. Arabs became the standard-bearers of this ideology, and they rose from oblivion to become, by its grace, a world power to be reckoned with. From Arabia this religion was disseminated to other people and other lands. When Arabs became disregardful of their duty towards the Lord, other peoples stepped ahead to uphold the banner of Islam. Egyptians, Spaniards, Saljuks, Kurds, Berbers, Turks, Indians, Mongols, etc., entered the fold of Islam, upheld its banner and served its cause. All of them made a name for themselves, in their own times. Islam is not the monopoly of a certain people. It belongs to the whole of humanity. Who knows when other people of the East and the West will embrace it and become the spear-head of Islamic revival and the pioneers of a Twentieth Century world renaissance.

Come new generations,
Proclaim the fight for truth
Raise up the banners of invincible faith
Build bridges with your life across
The gaping earth blasted with hatred
And march forward.